



→ G Miller

1950

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HIGHLAND GATHERINGS



Photo. Vandyk

H.M. THE KING

Frontispiece

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS.

* *Being Accounts of the*
Braemar, Northern *and* Luss Meetings,
by Sir Iain Colquhoun, Bart., D.S.O.
and Hugh Machell. *With contributions*
by John Macpherson *and* C. D. McCombie-
Smith, *and a Foreword by* H.R.H. The
Princess Royal, The Duchess of Fife.

ILLUSTRATED

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Northumberland Press Limited, Newcastle-on-Tyne*



Photo. Whyte

THE MACKINTOSH

Facing p. 7

TO

ALFRED DONALD

THE MACKINTOSH OF MACKINTOSH, C.B.E.

OF MOY HALL, INVERNESS, CHIEF OF THE CLAN CHATTAN

LORD-LIEUTENANT AND CONVENER OF INVERNESS-SHIRE



Louise The Royal.

H.R.H. THE PRINCESS ROYAL
DUCHESS OF FIFE

Facing p. 9

FOREWORD

By H.R.H. THE PRINCESS ROYAL, THE DUCHESS OF FIFE

THE spirit of friendly rivalry that is fostered by Highland gatherings can perhaps be matched by many a similar athletic contest, but I feel that this spirit combined with the pride of race and clan, that is so prevalent at these meetings, may be said to give them a special value.

There laird and clansman, crofter and shepherd, meet for the purpose of keeping alive the memories of a great past, and furthering either in person, or by their attendance, the continuance of those contests which will be of the greatest value in maintaining the best traditions of their race.

To anyone who has lived among and loved the mountains and their people, and truly felt their atmosphere, attendance at these gatherings must be in the nature of an acknowledgment of all that their race and country means to them.

In this book the authors have combined, in a most skilful manner, a romance and a bare statement of progress and athletic achievement. The records

FOREWORD

of Donald Dinnie, Sandy Mackintosh, and the McCombie-Smiths, are mingled with stories of Malcolm Canmore, the "'15," Lady Jane, Duchess of Gordon, and other romantic episodes of a cherished past.

We read with pleasure of the wave of national feeling, originating in the formation of a post of the British Legion, which caused the resuscitation of the Luss Gathering after a period of abeyance of ten years; and some indication of the popular affection for these gatherings can be gained from the splendid response made by the whole parish to the appeal for subscriptions in 1922.

The records of the Northern Meeting are most enjoyable reading, and give an excellent insight into the life of the Highlands from the days of the prohibition of Highland dress.

The games will be seen to have somewhat altered in accordance with the progress of the times, but throughout the gradual change until the present day, the same spirit of great pride in the good name and fortitude of the race has endured—that spirit which one cannot help feeling it is the intention of the gatherings and this book to maintain.

LOUISE PRINCESS ROYAL.

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SUMMARY OF EVENTS
AT BRAEMAR



Photo. Bissett

BRAEMAR GATHERING HELD IN FRONT OF OLD MAR CASTLE



Photo. Bissett

GENERAL VIEW OF BRAEMAR GAMES, 1926

Facing p. 17

SUMMARY OF EVENTS AT BRAEMAR

- 1800 July. Wrights' Walk began. Three carpenters, etc.
- 1816 January 19th. Incorporation.
- 1817 Registration.
- 1819 Rules found too generous. Funds spent on oatmeal.
- 1820 Meal bought. Subcommittee formed. Waterloo famine. Ball to Lord Fife, costing 3s. 6d.
- 1821 John Morgan elected clerk till his death in 1877.
- 1822 New members admitted. Venue Braemar Castle. Kilts essential.
- 1823 Room secured. Earl of Fife hon. pres. date 13th November.
- 1824 £66 deposited with Peter Farquharson at 3½ per cent. Shoulder belt presented by William Farquharson, now in keeping of relatives of Angus Mackintosh at Glenclunie. This name

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

occurs many times, one being president from 1885 to 1902. Dinner started at Invercauld Arms, 1s. 6d. a head and drinks optional.

- 1825 Rules revised. First recorded death. Carpenter's widow gets £6 10s.
- 1826 New rules of Mr. Chas. Cumming accepted. 21st July. Final meeting of Wrights. B.H.S. is new name.
- 1827 Procession and dinner on 23rd August. No ball, and no seats lent.
- 1828 Two girnels bought. 21st August, procession, dinner and ball.
- 1829 New vice-presidents added, and several grants made.
- 1830 First widow receives benefit. Rules revised.
- 1831 Rules passed and three hundred copies printed. Death of Duncan Watson, one of the three founders. His son died in 1917, aged eighty-eight.
- 1832 Lord Carmarthen (later Duke of Leeds) joins as hon. member. Gives Breadalbane tartans. Queen and others follow suit. **FIRST GAMES.** £5 prize money on last Thursday in August.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS AT BRAEMAR

- 1841 Postponed to 9th September. Peers become members.
- 1846 Repeal of Corn Laws. Meal buying stopped.
- 1848 14th September. Invercauld House. Queen present on a red-letter occasion.
- 1849 Braemar Castle. Queen contributes.
- 1851 Presentation of Cash Box. Death of Sir A. Duff, his son being elected in his place as hon. president.
- 1857 Sir James Duff, now Earl of Fife, joint patron with J. Farquharson. Great welcome in August at Corriemulzie, later at Mar Lodge.
- 1858 Numerous deaths including Duncan Mackintosh (1816). First Thursday in September.
- 1859 Queen invites Society to Balmoral on 22nd September. Silver snuff-box for tossing the caber won by G. Hutchinson.
- 1862 Death of Prince Consort. No games.
- 1863 Death of Malcolm McGregor (1816) whose grandfather was at Culloden. No games.
- 1864 Mar Lodge. Welcome to Colonel Farquharson.
- 1865 Prince of Wales present.

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- 1866 Word "Royal" added.
- 1867 Purse given to J. Morgan, secretary for forty-six years. Death of Charles Cumming, president 1826 to 1830.
- 1870 Deaths of Countess of Fife and Mrs. Farquharson. No games.
- 1871 Death of William Gruer (1816).
- 1873 Death of Angus Mackintosh. He kept a diary. Date 28th August.
- 1874 Strangers charged 5s. each at the ball. A funeral grant returned.
- 1877 Death of John Morgan, his son appointed secretary.
- 1879 Death of the Earl of Fife. No games.
- 1881 Held on 1st September owing to Volunteer Review at Edinburgh.
- 1882 Members subscriptions raised by 50 per cent.
- 1884 Death of Duke of Albany, and John Lamont, who had been president for about fifty years.
- 1885 Several changes on the committee.
- 1887 Queen invites to Balmoral on 1st September as guests.
- 1888 Death of James Farquharson. Son appointed patron. No games.

SUMMARY OF EVENTS AT BRAEMAR

- 1889 Earl of Fife asks to Mar Lodge. Honorary fund now £180.
- 1890 Queen asks to Balmoral.
- 1891 Sir A. Borthwick asks to Cluny Park.
- 1892 Death of Duke of Clarence. No games, but a muster at Lonach.
- 1893 Mar Castle for three years. Mr. Morgan ill, Mr. McGregor secretary.
- 1896 Victoria Hall, Auchindryne. No games this or next year.
- 1898 Queen asks to Balmoral. More prizes and hospitality.
- 1900 Death of John Ewan. J. Gruer elected treasurer. No games owing to the South African War.
- 1901 22nd January. Death of the Queen. No games. King elected patron.
- 1902 Cluny Park now the venue.
- 1906 Duke of Fife gave twelve acres, called Princess Royal Park. £1,000 spent on it and gate money started.

PREFATORY



Photo. Topical

PERTH HIGHLAND GATHERING
Harrison (Leith) swings Dowie (Alarkinch)



Photo. Lansell

BRAEMAR PROMINENT OFFICIALS
Left—Mr. John Ewan, Treasurer, and
Mr. John Grant, Secretary

PREFATORY

“ Don’t give us dull facts and figures; make it amusing and readable—local colour and anecdote. Side-track, if you will, but let it be chatty.”—*The Candid Friend*.

It is possible that after perusing these pages a hyper-critical reader may find fault with the collaborators for including such a lot of matter and information that at first sight has no apparent relativity to the games that are the *raison d’être* of this volume.

Our answer to this is, that, in our opinion, in order to give some reason for the existence of these gatherings and games, it is necessary to study—all too briefly in our limited space and time—the antecedents and habits of the clansmen amongst whom these annual festivals survive with such amazing and creditable tenacity to-day. It has been found impossible to separate the history of the Highlander as a soldier or a sportsman, or a peaceful resider (I believe that is the correct appellation) in the mountains, from his status as an athlete in these pages.

It must be remembered that athletes and sportsmen are two different characters. They are frequently

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combined in one person; indeed it is difficult to find a true athlete who is not a "sportsman" in the accepted terms of those who have acquired the *cachet* of a public school or the *imprimatur* of a leading university.

With what combative feelings do we take up a London newspaper, and find one page headed "All the sports." We look up and down its columns and can see not a single mention of a sport in it. In winter-time at all events, it is mainly of cup-ties: how so-and-so has sold his services from one club to another in the game called Association Football: how one hundred thousand young men watched some such game, when quite half of them would have been far more healthily employed in some game themselves, or having a five-mile walk in the country instead.

This is, of course, entirely apart from the betting and other undesirable commercialities that turn athletics into athleticism, and make men seek the gain and not the game.

Perhaps you find a column devoted to golf (which came from Holland) where professionalism is rampant. Strangely enough, this is not a game at all, because it can be played alone: it is certainly not a sport, but merely a pastime, which supplies to middle-aged persons that excuse for a walk that was never brought home to them in other days. One

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wonders what they did without it. It will always have its crazy votaries, young and old, but how few good golfers are also good shots, keen fishermen, or hunting men, i.e., sportsmen. Your average racing man and dog-breeder is a sporting man, quite a distinct class.

Let us turn from all this to the quiet seclusion of some Scottish glen, where, a few days before the great meetings, a handful of hard-working farm hands are practising with the caber or the shot. Do you think that bookmakers are dreamt of in their philosophy? Could anything be more incongruous with its surroundings than a deafening din of "3 to 1, Starkey!" or "Evens Maitland," while these honest Highlanders were tossing the caber before Royalty in the arena at Braemar?

Or again, how would it sound, just as The Mackintosh, at Inverness, walked up with Colonel Farquharson, to hear "I back McGregor for the stone" or "5 to 2 The Black Watch for the Tug-of-War"?

We doubt if betting prevails at the Highland Gatherings, and it is pleasant to think that the noisy undesirabilities of, say, the hound-trails in England, are not tolerated over the Border, where your true athlete, whether competitor or spectator, does not need the pandemonium of yelling bookmakers to call

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him to the contest. He wants to see the best men win, at the performance of the various feats, and not merely draw their money at the end.

We have to thank a great number of persons who have been of indispensable assistance in our search for accurate information as regards the games we have chronicled. In the Braemar district, there were the secretary and the treasurer, Messrs. Grant and Ewan, Mr. James Mackintosh, Mr. G. B. Lowe, Mr. Adamson, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Grant of the Invercauld Arms Inn at Crathie, Mr. John MacPherson, who is also a contributor, Dr. Leslie Stewart and Mr. W. A. Hartley, W.S., both visitors from Edinburgh, Mr. Richard David of Arbroath, the proprietors of the *Arbroath Herald*, Mr. Smith of the White Hart Hotel in that town, and a host of other kindly friends.

At Inverness we were given the full run of the files of the *Inverness Courier*, as well as the personal help of the proprietor, Mr. Evan M. Barron, Mr. Grant, and two members of the staff, whose deaths, I regret to say, took place not long after our meeting, viz., Mr. L. A. Boyne and Mr. James Macrae. They were particularly helpful on the field, on both days of the festival. In many respects they were like David and Jonathan, and it may be safely said that if their extreme courtesy and utility to a stranger like

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the writer counts for only a portion of their personal attributes, their loss must be well-nigh irreparable.

Major David Ross and his assistant secretary, Mr. Wotherspoon, were also unsparing in their efforts with information and facilities for gathering details impossible elsewhere, in which accuracy was of paramount importance.

H.R.H. the Princess Royal has not only contributed a masterly foreword, but presented us with her signed portrait for reproduction. The Marquis of Huntly, Lord Lovat, Sir Hector Munro, and The Mackintosh have all most kindly sent their portraits, while one of the most pleasing and typical of the pictures is that of Sir Iain Colquhoun, Bart., D.S.O., of Luss, congratulating Archie Cameron on his victory in the hill race, when the latter was over sixty years old. In the background may be seen Sir Iain's piper, Macfarlane, providing appropriate music at the same time.

Sincere thanks, too, are tendered to the owners of the copyrights of "Letters of Queen Victoria" and "Pages from a Private Diary" (Sir John Murray), "The Legends of the Braes of Mar" (Lewis Smith & Son), "Men of Muscle" by Chas. Donaldson (Messrs. Carter & Pratt) and "The Book of the Braemar Gathering" (*Arbroath Herald*).

The works of Taylor, the Water Poet, quite

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justify an incursion into matter of his, other than what is quoted in this book, if one can tolerate the somewhat gory and gruesome half century of which he wrote. The title of "Hell, Hull, and Halifax," anyhow, suggests possibilities of peculiar interest.

Amongst those who have been good enough to supply illustrations are Messrs. Bisset of Ballater, the Topical Press Agency, Sport & General, A. C. Milne of Brechin, Whyte, and Paterson, both of Inverness, and Messrs. Vandyk Ltd., of London.

It is now just over two hundred years since the death of King George I. One year after his accession in 1714, the standard was raised at Braemar to oppose the House of Hanover, and reinstate the House of Stuart. Within a few minutes' walk of the scene of that historic event, the twenty thousand crowd at Braemar now annually raises its unanimous voice to welcome our good King George V.

Let us hope and pray that never, even in another two hundred years, will it be necessary for the loyal subjects of our Sovereign to raise the standard, seen at Balmoral with such pride and patriotism last September, by the writer, to defend the House of Windsor against the hordes of Moscow, or any other foreign capital.

CHAPTER I
HISTORICAL



Photo. Bissett

H.M. QUEEN VICTORIA AT BRAEMAR



Photo. Bissett

BRAEMAR

The Duke of Fife

H.M. King Edward VII
The Prince of Wales

Princess Mary
Prince Edward

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL

“ Why should I waste invention to indite
Ovidian fictions or Olympian games?
My misty Muse enlightened with more light,
To a more noble pitch her aim she frames.
I must relate to my great Master JAMES,
The Caledonian peaceful war;
How noble minds do eternize their fames,
By martial greeting in the Braes of Mar:
How thousand gallant spirits came near and far,
With swords and targets, arrows, bows and guns,
That all the troop to men of judgment are
The God of War’s great never-conquered sons.
The sport is manly, yet none bleed but beasts,
And last the victor on the vanquished feasts.
If sport like this can on the mountains be,
Where Phœbus’ flames can never melt the snow:
Then let who list delight in vales below,
Sky-kissing mountains’ pleasures are for me:
What braver object can man’s eyesight see,
Than noble, worshipful and worthy wights,
As if they were prepared for sundry frights,
Yet all in sweet society agree?
Through heather, moss, ’mongst frogs, and bogs, and
fogs,
’Mongst craggy cliffs and thunder-battered hills,
Hares, hinds, bucks, roes, are chased by men and dogs,
Where two hours’ hunting fourscore fat deer kills.
Lowland, your sports are low as is your seat,
The HIGHLAND GAMES and minds are high and
great.”

So wrote John Taylor, the Water Poet, that great prolific author, whose period was from 1580 to 1653, and his writings anent Braemar may well form a prelude to a short incursion into the history of the district where the famous games described in this volume take place.

From old records we learn that what is now known as Braemar consists of Castleton and its extension. The old name was Kindrochit (in Gaelic, *Ceann Drochaid* = Bridge Head). The foundations of the old Market Cross exist to-day, near the Invercauld Arms Hotel. Thus the whole parish acquired this name, and was the parish of St. Andrew or Kindrochit, commonly called Braemar (in Gaelic, *Braigh Mhar* = Upper end of Mar).

Thus it is not really Braemar village at all, and is now for local government purposes united to Crathie, which is on the road to Balmoral, a few miles in an easterly direction.

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Hither resorted the ancient Kings of Scotland for the pleasures of the chase.

As far back as 732, King Hungus, or Angus, lived here and was the host of Bishop Acca of Hexham, on his flight from the pagan King of Northumbria. Incidentally, this refugee brought with him an arm bone of St. Andrew, removed from its enshrinement at Hexham. This bone eventually found its way to an elegant church at Kilrymont in Fife (now St. Andrews).

Craig Choinnich, the well-known hill, was the site of the hunting seat of Kenneth I, first King of Scotland.

Kindrochit Castle was built by Malcolm III and his Queen, St. Margaret, and was the resort of royalty until the time of Robert II. Owing to the black death of 1380, ruin overtook the building, and the reign of King James VI saw its collapse. From 1644 onwards, Braemar figures prominently in the Great Civil War, the Farquharsons of Monaltrie and of Inverey, with their Braemar men, being greatly praised for bravery. The latter were owners of the Balmoral Estate, and sold it to the Earl of Fife in 1798, who in turn sold it to the late Queen Victoria in 1852.

She built the present Castle in its present form, and the great attachment of her late Majesty to the

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place may be gathered from the following letters, which we are kindly permitted to quote.

The extract from a letter of Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians, from Balmoral, dated 13th September, 1848, is as follows:—

“ My letter to Louise will have informed you of our voyage and arrival here. This house is small but pretty, and though the hills seen from the windows are not so fine, the scenery all round is the finest almost I have seen anywhere. It is very wild and solitary and yet cheerful and beautifully wooded with the Dee running between the two sides of the hills. Lochnagar is the highest hill in the immediate vicinity and belongs to us. The soil is the driest and best known almost anywhere, and all the hills are as sound and hard as the road. The climate is also dry, and in general not very cold. There is a deer forest with many roe deer, and, on the opposite hill (which does not belong to us), grouse. There are also black cock and ptarmigan. Albert has, however, no luck this year, and he has in vain been after the deer, though they are continually seen, and often quite close by the house. The boys always wear their Highland dress.”

Another letter from the Queen to the Belgian Monarch is dated 6th October, 1851.

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“ I love my peaceful wild Highlands, the glorious scenery, the dear good people, who are much attached to us, and who feel their *Einsamkeit* sadly, very much. One of our Gillies, a young Highlander who generally went out with me, said in answer to my observation that they must be very dull here when we left: ‘ It’s just like death come all at once.’ ”

My last quotation is a telegram, dated 10th September, 1855, from Lord Panmure to Earl Granville, who was at that time Minister in attendance at Balmoral.

“ The Queen and Prince Consort occupied their new home for the first time on the 7th September. It was not yet completed but the Queen wrote: ‘ The house is charming, the rooms delightful, the furniture, papers, everything perfection.’ ”

“ I know each wayside wood, each moorland burn,
Each hidden byway and reposeful nook,
Where I may linger when the sun goes down,
Dipping tired feet in some cool-flowing brook;
I know the free hill and the glooming glen,
And kindly fires, and humble homes of men.”

—C. F. Smith.

The Home of the Farquharsons has been at Invercauld for over four hundred years, Colonel Alexander Haldane Farquharson (his portrait appears



Photo. Topical

COL. FARQUHARSON OF
INVERCAULD



THE MARQUIS OF HUNTLY,
P.C., D.L.
(Earl of Aboyne and Baron Meldrum)
Premier Marquis of Scotland

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opposite this page), being the present representative of the family. The house itself is at the moment occupied by Mr. Stanley S. Bond, of London, but the Colonel still resides in the near vicinity. Here took place the meeting of Jacobite Chiefs, to plan the rising of 1715. The whole district teems with interest for the archæologist and antiquarian, far too extensive to be included in a work of these dimensions concerning the gathering. Not only have Dr. Douglas Simpson and a troop of Boy Scouts excavated the castle ruins of Kindrochit and published accounts of the same, but the well-known "Legends" by John Grant are obtainable; Dr. John Stirton has written upon Balmoral; Mrs. Elizabeth Tayler had her vogue with "Tales"; Mr. Seton Gordon, the great naturalist and author, my friends, Mr. John Macpherson, J.P., Mr. M. D. Adamson the Poet, and Mr. G. B. Lowe have all contributed their quota to the history of the neighbourhood, while the names of McCombie Smith and A. G. Cumming stand out as authorities upon the athletic side of the subject matter contained in these pages. Nor must we overlook the fact that R. L. Stevenson in 1881 wrote "Treasure Island" at a cottage opposite the Victoria Hall. Nor again can I resist the temptation to quote from Taylor the account of the great hunting meet in Braemar on 27th August, 1715,

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as I feel sure this work would be incomplete without it.

“There did I find the truly Noble and Right Honourable Lords John Erskine, Earl of Mar, James Stuart, Earl of Murray, George Gordon, Earl of Enzie, son and heir to the Marquis of Huntly, James Erskine, Earl of Buchan, and John Lord Erskine, son and heir to the Earl of Mar, and their Countesses, with my much honoured and my best assured and approved friend, Sir William Murray, Knight of Abercairney, and hundreds of others, knights, esquires, and their followers; all and every man in general in one habit, as if Lycurgus had been there and made laws of equality. For once in the year, which is the whole month of August, and sometimes part of September, many of the nobility and gentry of the kingdom, for their pleasure, do come into these Highland countries to hunt, where they do conform themselves to the habit of the Highland men, who for the most part speak nothing but Irish; and in former time were those people which were called the Red-shanks. Their habit is shoes with but one sole apiece; stockings, which they call short hose, made of a warm stuff with divers colours, which they call tartan; as for breeches, many of them, nor their forefathers never wore any, but a jerkin of the same

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stuff that their hose is of, their garters being bands or wreaths of hay or straw, with a plaid about their shoulders, which is a mantle of divers colours, of much finer and lighter stuff than their hose, with blue flat caps on their heads, a handkerchief knit with two knots about their neck; and thus are they attired. Now their weapons are long bows and forked arrows, swords and targets, harquebusses, muskets, dirks, and Lochaber axes. With these arms I found many of them armed for the hunting. As for their attire, any man of what degree soever that comes amongst them, must not disdain to wear it; for if they do, then they will disdain to hunt, or willingly to bring in their dogs; but if men be kind unto them, and be in their habit, then are they conquered with kindness, and the sport will be plentiful. This was the reason that I found so many noblemen and gentlemen in those shapes. But to proceed to the hunting.

“My good Lord of Mar having put me into that shape, I rode with him from his house, where I saw the ruins of an old Castle, called the Castle of Kindroghit (Castleton). It was built by King Malcolm Canmore, for a hunting house, who reigned in Scotland when Edward the Confessor, Harold, and Norman William reigned in England. I speak of it, because it was the last house that I saw in those parts, for I was the space of twelve days after, before

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I saw either house, cornfield, or habitation for any creature, but deer, wild horses, wolves and such like creatures, which made me doubt that I should never have seen a house again.

“Thus the first day we travelled eight miles, where there were small cottages built on purpose to lodge in, which they called Lonchards. I thank my good Lord Erskine, he commanded that I should always be lodged in his lodging, the kitchen being always on the side of a bank, many kettles and pots boiling, and many spits turning and winding, with great variety of cheer; as venison baked, sodden, roast, and stewed beef, mutton, goats, kid, hares, fresh salmon, pigeons, hens, capons, chickens, partridge, moor-coots, heath-cocks, capercailzies, and termagants (ptarmigan); good ale, sack, white and claret, tent or Alicante, with most potent Aquavitæ.

“All these, and more than these we had continually, in superfluous abundance, caught by falconers, fowlers, fishers, and brought by my Lord’s tenants and purveyors to victual our camp, which consisted of fourteen or fifteen hundred men and horses. The manner of the hunting is this: five or six hundred men do rise early in the morning, and they do disperse themselves divers ways, and seven, eight, or ten miles compass, they do bring and chase

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in the deer in many herds, two, three, or four hundred in a herd, to such and such a place, as the Nobleman shall appoint them; then when day is come, the lords and noblemen of their companies, do ride or go to the said places, sometimes wading up to their middles through bournes and rivers. And then, they being come to the place, do lie down on the ground, till these foresaid scouts, which are called the Tinchel, do bring down the deer; but as the proverb says of a bad cook, so these Tinchel-men do lick their own fingers; for besides their bows and arrows, which they carry with them, we can hear now and then a harquebuss or a musket go off, which they do seldom discharge in vain. Then after we had stayed there three hours or thereabouts, we might perceive the deer appear on the hills round about us, their heads making a show like a wood, which being followed close by the Tinchel, are chased down into the valley where we lay; then all the valley on each side being waylaid with a hundred couple of strong Irish greyhounds, they are let loose as the occasion serves upon the herd of deer, so that with dogs, guns, arrows, dirks, and daggers in the space of two hours, fourscore fat deer were slain, after which are disposed of some one way and some another, twenty and thirty miles, and more than enough left for us to make merry withal at our rendezvous."

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From its geographical position, being some thousand odd feet above sea-level, Braemar was and is well known for the longevity of its inhabitants, and in this connection I must mention the venerable Highlander, Patrick Grant, who was granted a pension of one guinea a week by His Majesty the King in 1822. He died at Braemar on March 11th, 1824, in the one hundred and eleventh year of his age. He expired while sitting in his elbow chair, having felt scarcely any previous illness. His pension devolved upon his daughter Anne, for her life. It was thought at the time that he was the only survivor of the Battles of Culloden and Falkirk, and he was present at the embarkation of the Pretender from France.

If we cross the River Cluny by the handsome stone bridge, close to the Kindrochit Castle ruins, we come to Auchindryne, before 1870 only a small hamlet, now large and more modern than Castleton. Here are the Fife Arms Hotel and the few useful shops of the village.

Who, asks Taylor, amongst others, followed Balmoral to the battlefield? Who donned the white cockade? Who drew the broad claymore? Who were "out" in '45?

Why, even the Auchindrynes, who learnt war in 1715, under their ancestors Alastair, William and

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James, their brothers. The ruins of William's house are still traceable; in the winter so much mud collected in the courtyard that the occupants had to walk on stepping-stones to get across it.

Of course in this district periodical disputes arose between the clans and countrymen, the causes being disputes in the markets, and the forcing of boundaries on the occasions of weddings and funerals. An event of common occurrence was the complete smashing of the coffin to pieces and the rolling of the corpse amongst the feet of the combatants! One instance stands out amongst the rest. On the top of the Cairnwall some Glenshee and Glenisla men thought to vanquish the men of Mar. They were led by Alastair Ealach of Glenisla, a mighty giant, who carried a coffin, trampling down, and tumbling aside the men of Mar, like some river horse down a sedgy, reedy bank, while cries of "Back with the men of Mar!" "Clear them away!" rose in the turmoil. It only needed William Auchindryne to terminate the conflict, by seizing the foremost of the Glenshee and Glenisla men by twos and threes and fours, and tossing them over each other like children. Then he hailed Alastair Ealach as follows: "Hold back, fellow; if you bring one corpse forward I promise there will be three to carry home with you again!" Glenisla failed before Farquharson, and yielded up

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the coffin, and the last stages of the combat consisted of refreshments and good friendship.

I have an interesting episode of the Battle of Falkirk. This is said to have lasted only a quarter of an hour, so fierce was the fire and charge of the Highlanders. A number of fugitives were surrounded by lines of Farquharsons and The Lady M'Intosh's men. Glengarry came up to find her ladyship saving one from the fury of the clansmen. "And whom have we prisoner here?" said he. "Morchall" (i.e., Invercauld), was the reply. "How is this? Morchall among the English?" He was eventually released on parole, and returned home.

The story of Culloden is well known. The clans all fought—the clans all fell; no more will the banner of the Stuarts spread its ample folds to the breeze, amongst the hills of Caledonia.

On the morning of the battle, William Auchindryne played on the violin to his men, "The Braes o' Mar," as they wished to dance after breakfast. This was interrupted by the sound of cannon on Drummossie Moor, and then it was a case of buckle, belt, and away. In grief at the rout of the Highlanders, William broke his violin over his knee, and never played thereafter. During the pursuit by the redcoats, William dispatched seven of them with his own good two-handed sword. He was the possessor

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of splendid flowing golden hair at this time, but in this one night it turned into a silvery grey.

As an instance of the wonderful endurance of pain by these brave men, I must relate how McGregor of Inverigny and Fleming of Auchintoul fell wounded side by side, the latter with a broken leg. On the arrival of the redcoats, a movement by McGregor cost him his life from a bayonet thrust. Then it was that a covetous soldier "spotted" Fleming's new boots, which he proceeded to appropriate. When it came to his broken leg to have this attention, the pain must have been excruciating, but having seen the fate of his comrade, Fleming bore it in absolute silence, as if being a lifeless man. It is cheerful to note that, as a reward for his bravery, he was able to crawl to a cottage, where he not only recovered, but married the fair maiden who nursed him back to health (more than he expected).

This story calls to my mind that true one of a north-country soldier in the recent Great War, who performed this same operation on a dead German. The difference, however, lay in this particular, that the German's leg all came away into the grasp of his hands with the boot!

In spite of all the garrisons that were placed in castles at this time to enforce changes and order, in dress as in other matters, it is noteworthy that the

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disuse of the Highland dress—the garb of the Gael—could not be brought about. What does the poem say?

“ There’s nought in the Highlands but syboes and leeks,
And lang-leggit callants gaun wanting the breeks;
Wanting the breeks, and without hose and shoon,
But we’ll a’ win the breeks when King Jamie comes hame.”

The best instance of this was that of Donald Lamont, the Braemar drover. He hated the obnoxious garment of the Saxons, but he was persuaded to try a pair, for a journey to Glenshee on business. Before proceeding far, he felt his limbs all frayed and irritated by these strange habiliments. He therefore took them off, and swung them over his shoulders, but being too far on his journey to return for his kilt, he completed the journey as he was. Even on his return, his limbs were chafed and smarting with pain, so he heaved the trews into the fire, exclaiming “Gu’n gabh an donas a chiad duine a rinn iad!” (May the Devil seize the first inventor of them!)

Another story of Donald Lamont refers to the shooting party of Lord Howe, at Braemar. His lordship had been in command of forces in the American War of Independence, and had not achieved much reputation thereat. This day the sport was of the worst, for the apparent reason that

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Donald was dodging about all the time, and the guns could not fire, because of his unwelcome presence. Lord Howe got extremely angry and threatened to shoot Donald if this conduct continued. "God, my lord," said Donald, "if ye shoot me, it will maybe prove waur for ye than a' the Americans ye ever shot." Such was the reply to one whose defeats by Americans outnumbered the occasions of his success.

A few words about Braemar Castle may not be inappropriate. It was built in 1628, by John, Earl of Mar, and held garrisons under General Monk during the Great Civil War. Sixty years later it was burned by the men of Braemar to prevent such occupation, and left without a roof, until its confiscation with lands by the Government in 1715. In 1732 Farquharson of Invercauld became the owner, who leased it in 1746 after Culloden, to the Government, who used it for garrison purposes, and also to carry out the abolition of illicit distilleries in the district. An illustration of it appears opposite page 17.

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN

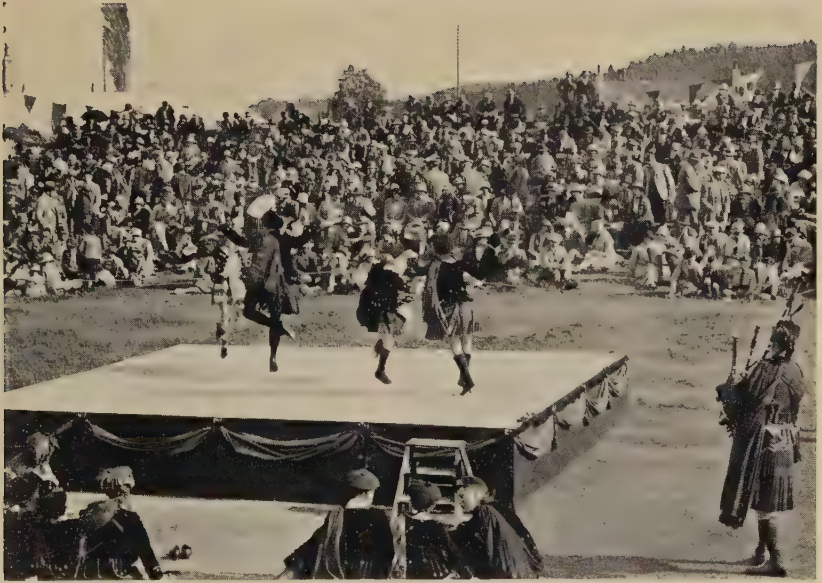


Photo. Sport and General

ABOYNE HIGHLAND GAMES, SCOTLAND



Photo. Bissett

AUSTRALIAN LADY PIPERS AT BRAEMAR, 1926

Facing p. 52

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN

“ The standard on the Braes of Mar
Is up and streaming rarely;
The gathering pipe on Lochnagar
Is sounding lang an’ sairly.
The Highland men
Frae hill and glen
In martial hue,
Wi’ bonnets blue,
Wi’ belted plaids,
An’ burnished blades,
Are coming late and early.

Wha wadna join our noble chief,
The Drummond and Glengarry,
Macgregor, Murray, Rollo, Keith,
Panmure and gallant Harry?
Macdonald’s men,
Clan Ronald’s men,
MacKenzie’s men,
Macgillivray’s men,
Strathallan’s men,
The Lowlan’ men,
Of Callander and Airlie.

Fy! Donald, up an’ let’s awa’,
We canna’ longer parley,
When Jamie’s back is at the wa’,
The lad we love sae dearly.
We’ll go, we’ll go,
An’ seek the foe,
An’ fling the plaid,
An’ swing the blade,
An’ forward dash,
An’ hack and slash,
And fleg the German Carlie.”

THE origin of this famous gathering has been attributed to King Malcolm VI of Scotland. In 1040 he felt the want of messengers either to carry his commands far and near, Edinburgh being one destination, or possibly his idea was to establish a regular system of post runners.

Kindrochit Castle, close to where the standard was raised in 1715, was in more ancient times a hunting seat of Malcolm Canmore, son of the Duncan murdered by Macbeth. To ascertain which of his dependents were the most capable runners for this purpose, he assembled all his tenants and subjects (so says Grant) on the mound of the plain whereon the present castle is built. A splendid baldric and sword, besides a purse of gold, was to be given to the youth who should first reach the summit of Craig Choinnich, as seen from the rendezvous. Among the assembled competitors stood conspicuous the two eldest sons of M'Gregor of Ballochbuie. The

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runners were ranged. The King held the glass ready to be turned. Three lord judges waved the flag on the hill to signify they were ready. The King struck his shield; the trumpet sounded; the tartans streamed and whistled in the wind; the ground trembled beneath their tramp; the eye seemed to carry them forward, not to follow them; they rose and fell again, bounding like the motion of the swift sea. Just as they reached the foot of the hill, another young man, perspiring profusely, scarlet with heat, and breathless with haste, broke into the circle where the King stood viewing the competitors.

"Oh! will you let me run," cried the youth, "will you let me run?"

"You are too late, my good fellow," observed the King.

"Oh no, no; let me run, let me run"; and unbuckling as he spoke, he had already thrown aside his sword, dirk, and skian, tightened the belt of his kilt, and now stood leaning forward on one foot, looking imploringly at the King, and casting every moment an unquiet glance at the racers, who were now toiling up the hillside.

"Go if you wish," said the King, "but you are too late."

The youth did not wait to answer.

"Who is he?" inquired Malcolm of his forester.

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“The youngest of M’Gregor of Ballochbuie’s sons. His two brothers are among those that compete.”

The youth cleared the plain, fleet as a stag. The foremost were hanging on the face of the hill above him, diminished to children and seeming scarce to move. Young M’Gregor appeared to leap up like the vigorous goat, now climbing on all fours, now seizing the long heather with his hands, and drawing himself up, always up. He stopped no breathing space; he looked not behind; he never missed a step or hold. He reached the last of the line of white that marked the progress of the runners through the long heather and scattered bushes.

“The springal will beat them all,” exclaimed Malcolm; “look how he ascends!”

“More power to him,” exclaimed our huge old friend Allan Durward, looking as if he meant it.

The race became more and more exciting. Some of the hindermost had indeed given up; but all those who were not despairingly far behind put forth thew and sinew, and pressed close after each other ready to take advantage of every accident. The two M’Gregors had indeed left the others considerably behind, but they both might fail; now was the critical moment. Young M’Gregor sprang forward with unabated energy, passing the others one after another. They were now hanging on the brow of that steep

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which stands as a wall to a kind of steppe sloping from the east westwards, and from behind which rises the last elevation seen from the Castle plain. The youth was now next to his brothers. They had scaled the steep, but as the last of them was disappearing behind it, his form rose erect on its edge, then bent forward and plunged in headlong pursuit after them. Now close up behind them he cried out : “ Halves, brothers, and I’ll stop.”

“ Gain what you can,” replied the hero of the boar-hunt, “ and keep what you gain. I will do the same.”

The second was too breathless to speak. The young lad never halted; even while he spoke he rushed onwards, and the first, who had taken a breathing space, saw him pass the second, and bound within a few paces of the place where he himself was. They were now engaged on the last steppe, and as they reappeared to the spectators, there were two abreast, both equally ardent, both exerting themselves to the utmost.

“ Now, brother,” said the youngest again, “ halves and I will yield.”

“ No, never,” returned he ; “ keep what you gain.”

They felt their heads dizzy, their eyes dim and painful—the breath rolled quick through their nostrils like fire—their hearts beat louder than the sound of their footsteps—every muscle and sinew was tightened

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to breaking—the foam in their mouths seemed dried to sand—their bleeding lips, when closed, glued themselves together—the sweat pearled on their skin in cold drops—and their feet rose and fell mechanically more than otherwise. Now they come in sight of the goal—now the judges encourage them by their cheers—now they seem renewed again in vigour. The youngest put his whole soul forth; the oldest summoned up all the strength of his tougher frame. Terribly pressed, he was yet determined to gain, and stretched out his arm to impede the motion of his rival, but felt nothing. They had only four yards to go. He looked to his side, expecting to see him on the ground. At that moment the tartans grazed the skin of his knee. His brother had leaped forward below his outstretched arm. Furious he bounded on and fell, his hand clutching with iron grasp the kilt of his rival. He was yet two yards from the flag and his strength was exhausted. He could not drag the other's prostrate body one step, and now he saw the hindermost fast approaching, encouraged by this incident. Quick as thought, loosening the belt of his kilt he resigned it to the hero of the boar-hunt.

“I have yielded everything to you hitherto,” quoth he, “and that I will also.”

He reached the signal with three feeble springs, seized the staff and threw it into the air; then falling

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down, buried his face in the fresh heather and damp earth. A loud shout from the plain told that the spectators had seen someone gain. But the victor and his vanquished heard it not. They lay all three, within a few paces of each other, unable to move arm or limb, but they panted so strongly that their bodies seemed to rise of themselves from the ground. When they rose up, their faces were deadly pale, checkered with livid black lines and spots. The youngest had reached the top in three minutes. Thus the origin of the Braemar Games attaches itself to the days of Malcolm of the Big Head.

Before we leave the subject of the postal system, we note that one, Donald Brown, was the runner between Cupar Angus and Braemar, from 1780 to 1795, once a week, and paid by local landowners.

In 1795 a G.P.O. was established at Kincardine O'Neil, five miles from Aboyne. Duncan Cumming was the postman, three days a week, at Braemar, Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

Donald Brown had a son called John, who was a quarryman, and a celebrated local personage. One year he got rather tipsy the day before the Gathering, but managed to turn up at the field at twelve midday, in his corduroy trousers, just as he had left work in the quarry.

This, of course, created comment amongst the

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spectators, and Mrs. Farquharson is reported to have inquired whether Lord Fife did not provide proper costume for the clansmen on his estate. Whatever the answer was, she provided him very soon afterwards with a pair of trousers of the proper Farquharson tartan!

On another occasion, at Glencallater, where he was engaged as a shepherd, he had also the vine-leaves in his hair, and slept peacefully through the forenoon of the day in question.

His master came up about this time to see how he was, but John saw him coming and went out of the bothy door with his dog, and ran down to the loch adjacent to the place. After going up to his knees in the water with his dog, he returned and found his master in the house by the fire, inquiring how he got so wet. John replied, "Git oot o' the way—let me dree mesel! If you'd been oot amongst sheep, you'd be wet too."

Famous sports generally have small beginnings, and the great Gathering at Braemar, not only for the games, but also the social convivialities that keep together, should this indeed be necessary, the multi-tartaned clans of Highlanders from far and near, is no exception to the rule.

It was in July, 1800, that the Wrights' Walk, as it was called, originated, the names of Duncan

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Watson, Duncan Mackintosh, Malcolm McGregor, William Gruer, and Angus Macdonald being the very first recorded. To these, or perhaps more strictly, to three carpenters amongst them, with white aprons, is attributed the epigenesis of the meeting now patronized by Royalty and all the noblest aristocracy in bonnie Scotland and elsewhere.

This Society was duly incorporated and registered, and the funds allocated periodically towards the assistance of the dependents of poor members. These grants were, however, soon found to be on too liberal a scale, compared to the amount received from the contributors, and so it became necessary to curtail them to obviate disaster.

In 1819, the funds were invested in oatmeal, owing, it is said, to the famine resulting from the Waterloo Campaign.

Lord Fife became a patron, and the Society gave him a grand ball as an official celebration of the event. The total cost of this ball was 3s. 6d.! Some ball, I imagine. I wish these things were as cheap nowadays!

The national costume of kilts is soon after made compulsory, a room is engaged for the meetings under the presidency of the Earl of Fife, and a proper festival was held on 13th November. The funds seem to have been £66, and this was deposited with

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Mr. Peter Farquharson, to bear interest at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and a dinner is inaugurated at the Invercauld Arms Hotel, at 1s. 6d. per head, drinks optional, date 1824.

Revision of the rules occurred, the name "Royal Highland Society" being adopted.

In 1828, two girnels are bought, each to hold about a hundred bolls of meal. For those who, like myself some years ago, never heard of either a boll or a girnel, I hasten to say that a girnel is a huge chest, or square wooden box, made of pine or spruce. A boll is a measure of meal up to six bushels, or sometimes described as ten stones in weight. The price of a boll was not to exceed 16s.

Three hundred copies of the revised rules were printed for circulation. In 1831, one of the founders, Duncan Watson, died, and we notice that the list of vice-presidents included Lord Elcho, Sir David Kinloch, Sir Thomas (not Harry) Lauder, Sir William Cumming, Messrs. Farquharson Innes, Archibald Butter, Robert Sutton, and Henry Foljambe.

1832 sees the first games, the prize-money being £5, on the last Thursday in August. The Marquis of Caermarthen (later Duke of Leeds) became an honorary member and presented all his retainers with full Breadalbane tartan costumes. This good

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example was soon followed by Queen Victoria with Royal Stuart tartans, and other local chieftains according to their clans.

One interesting event in 1842 was a competition for the reading of the Gaelic language and its translation.

In 1847, the purchase of meal is stopped, owing to the repeal of the Corn Laws.

Queen Victoria being now interested, her late Majesty invited the Society to Balmoral on the 22nd September, 1859. A silver snuff-box is the first prize for tossing the caber, a shoulder belt was given, and a medal for the race up the fell.

1865, King Edward was present, and the word "Royal" was applied to the games. They had to be cancelled, of course, on numerous occasions, such as the death of the Prince Consort, the Earl and Countess of Fife, the Duke of Albany, and later still, in recent times, the Duke of Clarence.

In the years 1887 and 1890 Her Majesty again invited the clans to Balmoral. In 1891 Sir Algernon Borthwick has them at Cluny Park. The next three years they are at Mar Castle, and in 1896 the meeting was held at the Victoria Hall, Auchindryne: in 1897 the Diamond Jubilee put off the festival, but in 1898 and 1899 it took place again at Balmoral, enhanced by more prizes and the great hospitality of

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Queen Victoria, luncheon and dinner being provided for all the Fife, Invercauld, Lonach, and the Queen's own Balmoral Highlanders.

The South African War and the lamented death of Her Majesty in 1901 made still more cancellations, and His Majesty King Edward VII became a patron.

In 1902 a return is made to Cluny Park, a truly beautiful spot and close to the River Dee. The last event to be recorded before coming to the actual sports is the gift by the Duke of Fife in 1906, of twelve acres of ground, on which over £1,000 was spent in that year in improvement for the purpose of the games. A charge for admission was then started, and with permission from the Duchess of Fife, the ground was christened "The Princess Royal Park."

The foregoing account has been offered in some brevity, as my friend, Mr. G. B. Lowe, in "The Book of the Braemar Gathering" gives us annually all the information that can be desired, and we cordially recommend everyone to have a copy of this invaluable souvenir, in which, year by year, new features are introduced, and articles contributed by littérateurs of world-wide reputation, eminently qualified to handle the subjects upon which they write. Copiously illustrated, this booklet makes a most acceptable present for those of whom force of circumstances deprives the opportunity of being

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personally present on the occasion, a volume of incalculable value in clubs and hospitals, and one of the strongest links forged in that great Caledonian chain that binds the clansmen on their native heath to their countless compatriots across the cosmic continents. Just as the tune of John Peel is their anthem to hunting men and women in the whole universe, so the name Braemar is never absent from the thoughts of the Scottish sportsman and athlete all the world over. Long may it remain thus.

CHAPTER III

FEATS — BRAEMAR ROYAL HIGHLAND
SOCIETY — THE LUSS GATHERING —
THE NORTHERN MEETING



Photo. Bissett

Viscount Trematon	Duke of York	Prince of Wales
Earl of Athlone	Prince Henry	Marquis of
Col. Farquharson	Lady Maud Carnegie	Aberdeen
The Princess Royal		



Photo. Bissett

BALMORAL AND FIFE COMMISSIONERS, PAST AND PRESENT
 Sir J. D. Ramsay, Major Mackenzie, Capt. William Mackintosh

Facing p. 69

CHAPTER III

I—FEATS

LET us now pass to the hefty feats of these brawny Highlanders.

It gives us some idea how this meeting grew, if we recollect that in 1832 the events were five in number, and the prize-money £5. In 1923 they had fifty-six events and £185. Comparing this with English Sports such as, for instance, Grasmere, of which a comprehensive history exists, written by one of the collaborators of this volume, we find their prize-money is £250, but there are only about twelve events.

The competitors at Braemar go in for putting the stone, of 28 lb. (without any hop), throwing the hammer of 14, 16, or 22 lb., formerly with a 3 feet handle, later increased to 4 feet 2 inches, tossing the caber, by some considered the most characteristic and picturesque contest of them all, flat races, varying in distance from 700 to 2,000 yards, bagpipe music (introduced in 1853), sword-dancing and others of various sorts, wrestling, a fell race, length of service

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competition, the reading and translating of Gaelic, high leaping, long leap, sack race, hurdle race, and vaulting, which started in 1895.

Taking the events *seriatim*, the distance the stone has been put varies from 25 feet in 1838 by J. McHardy, to 32 feet 11 inches by A. A. Cameron, in 1902. The world's record is 51 feet for the 16 lb.

Prizes are given in the caber events more for general style than distance, which is not recorded. The athlete has to turn the huge plaything completely over before he qualifies, in such a way that the small end by which he held it to start is farthest from him at the finish. We treat with the possible origin of this pastime elsewhere.

Throwing the hammer of 14 lb. shows us Peter McHardy in 1838 with 87 feet and John Cutts in 1840 with 89 feet 2 inches to their credit. With 16 lb. short handle, Geo. Davidson, 1881, 99 feet 4 inches; with long handle, A. A. Cameron, 1902, 117 feet 10 inches. The world's record is 189 feet 6 inches.

The fell race was from Braemar Castle Park to the top of Craig Choinnich, for the medal, distance in 1842, 1,384 yards, time four minutes, by James Cutts. This race, as tending to shorten life or at any rate seriously affect the constitution of the competitors, was stopped by Queen Victoria.

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Perhaps the most noted all-round athlete was Donald Dinnie, of whom a fuller account appears in another portion of this work. He put the 28 lb. stone 31 feet in 1867; threw the 16 lb. hammer 92 feet 4 inches in 1865; the 22 lb. hammer 84 feet 9 inches; leapt 5 feet 4½ inches in the high jump, and 17 feet 11 inches in the broad jump, besides being a flat and hurdle race winner on numerous occasions.

Alexander Robertson, of Glenisla, was also an all-round man; his 16 lb. hammer went 90 feet 7 inches; he was second at the hurdles and first in the half-mile.

Up to 1906, an extra interest was added to the hurdle race, because it finished through the River Dee!

Duncan Calder was the first to win the piping, in 1853, the usual items being a march, strathspey, and reel.

For the dancing, we find the Highland Fling, Reel of Tulloch, and Seaun Truibhas.

A well-known Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, whom I had the pleasure to meet at Braemar, tells me that Highland dancing is a principal, if not the chief feature of this historic gathering, and this indeed is apparent from a glance at the programme. Out of thirty events, no less than fourteen are dancing in some one or other of its forms. We find competitions

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for solos as well as in groups young and old. "But," asks my friend, "is anyone really old when dancing in the Highlands is concerned?" Go to the Games and just look at those standing about the platform. Whom do you see? A fine hale and hearty Highlander, like James Michie, one of the judges for the modern Highland steps. Who, to look at him, with his erect carriage, clear complexion and eye, would think that he was over seventy-six years of age? Go later in the day to the local ball. Who are there taking their places in the centre of the floor, when the pipes strike up with the tullochgorm, but the Lamonts, the Mackintoshes, the McHardys, and such like, with the children of some of them (all keen little dancers themselves, remember) looking on or forming up in groups by themselves and dancing alongside? Then ask yourself: Is dancing the perquisite of youth? and you will be convinced that, while it may be so in some parts of the country farther south, it is not so here at all events. And for a very good reason, too, for when in Aberdeenshire one is in the very home of dancing in the British Isles, whether it be modern or Highland. Why is it? It was one of the Skinner family, the well-known dancing teachers in Aberdeen, who asked this question a hundred years ago. Why should fashionable people from London come to Aberdeen to learn their steps? He shrewdly surmised



Photo. Sport and General

MARCH PAST OF 1000 PIPERS AT DUNOON

FEATS

that it must have paid them to incur all this expense to do so. So we gather from the records in Badminton.

When the Royal Society was formed (our authority is the Minutes) dancing was at an early date made a feature and good prizes offered.

At the frequent local balls, held not only practically in every parish during the winter, but also during the summer months, the modern dances naturally enough take place. The waltz has always held its own, and it is real waltzing when done in competitions, though as done in the south, the foxtrot influence tells against it.

But surely no ball is complete without its good old traditional "Grand March." Those who saw it in 1926 as a prelude to general dancing at the Society's Ball in the Auchindryne Hall, will not forget its stateliness and quietness (but for the skirl of the pipes hailing from the lands of Balmoral and Mar) of the movements of the dancers round the room with the pipers marching before. Then came the reels, the tullochgorms, strathspeys and Highland reels, followed by a few foxtrots (how can you exclude this?), then back again to something Highland, e.g., the "Schottische." One saw in it, the stately figure of Mr. Cumming, a Braemar veteran, who must be over eighty now, moving through the maze of

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dances as if to the manner born. No excitement or distress—for one must never forget that the Highlander always dances with a dignified reserve, well within his stride, so to speak.

He does not lift his arms and hands higher than his head, or shout or clap his hands except at the appointed times. Through ignorance of the rules in this respect, so much of what looks like Highland reels is spoilt by southerners making it as if it were a wild mad romp. The Highlander does not do it thus, and he does not like seeing it done so by others at a ball. Old country dances like "The Flowers of Edinburgh," "Strip the willow," and "Petronella" long held place in these gatherings and are coming back to their own again.

Naturally these native dances supply the talent shown in the flings and reels on the platform in the centre of the ring, before the King and Queen at the great annual festival of the games. Of late years, however, there has been, we think, a tendency to exploit the occasion by the influx of professional dancers from the southern towns. This is a pity, but perhaps it will correct itself in a few years, because there are evidences of a young generation of Highland dancers in the parishes of Crathie and Braemar growing up, who are quite as keen as their progenitors in acquiring the steps, and the Society is evidently

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confining its events more to local talent, and the encouragement of *teaching* of dancing which they are now giving to these young aspirants promises well for the future.

Highland dancing on the platform, as an exhibition, is best performed by fully grown men, and as explained above, they certainly keep it up to a considerable age, to their own evident enjoyment and the benefit of their health. Boys and girls shine best in the ballroom (unless under fourteen).

Where can you see smarter or more really effective Highland dancing than in the quiet, restrained style of the Aberdeenshire girls at their ordinary local dances? Having been trained almost from infancy by their parents in the foundation steps, they take to it naturally when they grow up, while their young men partners throw themselves with zest into the flings and steps, so as to accompany them in the small, almost invisible steps they take with very little body movement.

But when all is said and done, they invariably leave you with the gratifying impression that, quiet and restrained as they may appear, they are, one and all, "dancing" in the highest sense of the word, and long may they so continue.

"Revenons à nos moutons," as Sir Walter would say.

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

It would occupy too much space to enumerate all the distinguished men who have competed at Braemar : we must always, however, remember " C. D." and his father, W. McCombie Smith, a great athlete and writer; Alexander Mackintosh, of whom a fuller account will be found elsewhere in this volume, with his portrait and some of the prizes he won (his best feat was tossing the caber, and he won prizes for fifty years); James Michie for fifteen years; and Peter Cameron of Lumphanan, who jumped 5 feet 7 inches in his kilt, and did a broad jump of 19 feet 6 inches.

The Duke of Fife's butler, John Gruer, Inverey, threw the 16 lb. hammer 87 feet 8 inches, and was also a well-known competitor at Stamford Bridge.

George Davidson, Drumoak, and Kenneth Macrae, Nairn, were famous in the heavy competitions. Mr. A. G. Cumming also stands out, having been a contestant or a judge at this gathering for the years since 1880. He kept on winning prizes year after year for the stone, hammer, caber, etc.

At Balmoral in 1890 appeared D. A. M. Ross of Philadelphia, who put the shot of 28 lb. 30 feet 9 inches.

Vaulting was introduced in 1895, the best feat being that of John Mackenzie, of Glasgow, who did 11 feet 2 inches in 1906. He also threw the 16 lb.

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hammer 86 feet; 28 lb. stone, 28 feet 2 inches; his long leap was 19 feet 9 inches, and he won prizes for running, dancing and wrestling.

Such splendid accounts appear in the Press every year after these games that we hesitate to offer anything in conclusion on the last time the Gathering was held. But so great was the concourse and the general tone of the proceedings that the occasion calls for comment.

The weather was everything that could possibly be desired: small wonder, then, that upwards of twenty thousand spectators assembled at Princess Royal Park for the centenary so universally appreciated.

The various clansmen first of all assembled behind the Invercauld Arms Hotel, close to the historic spot where the standard was raised in 1715 and every soul was stirred to its depths by the bright equipment and martial bearing of the descendants of those mighty men of valour who met there in the days of King George I.

At noon the procession started for the Park. First came the Balmoral Highlanders with their Lochaber axes, in command of Major D. W. A. Mackenzie, D.S.O., M.C. The pipers, under Pipe-Major Forsyth, the King's piper, played the "Cock of the North," and afterwards "Highland Rorie." The standard-bearer was Mr. James Abercrombie, head

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

keeper and stalker. The badge was of thistle and royal oak, and the tartan the Royal Stuart.

Next came the Duffs, with Mr. William Mackintosh at their head, carrying pikes, to the strains of "The 79th's Farewell to Gibraltar." The standard-bearer was Mr. Charles Grant, and the badge of holly.

Then followed the Invercauld men in Farquharson tartan, under Colonel Gregor, and the standards borne by Messrs. Duncan Dewar and Alexander Mackintosh. With claymores held aloft, their badge was of fir, and the music that of "The Invercauld March."

During all this, no time is being lost in the athletic part of the meeting, and the various events continue amongst the competitors with the greatest possible punctuality as the items are tabulated to occur.

A novelty this year was the inclusion in the parade of the Australian Ladies' pipe band by special command, and well indeed did they deserve the cheers that greeted their appearance, so many thousands of miles away from their homes.

Attention is naturally about this time focussed upon the arrival of Royalty, and all eyes turn with loyal expectation to the tasteful pavilion that will presently welcome its distinguished occupants. The



Photo. Tobital

BRAEMAR HIGHLAND GATHERING
THE MARCH PAST OF THE BALMORAL HIGHLANDERS

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Royal Arms, heather chains, rowan berries and evergreens, festooning the erection under fluttering flags, all combine to beautify the scene and deck the arena in a manner fitting for the Monarch it will soon contain.

Even now, as we wait, there is a stir at the entrance, and though not the Royal Party, a pleasant diversion was caused by the arrival of a carriage containing Mrs. Farquharson and her daughter, Mrs. Robin d'Erlanger. Premature cheers gave way to amusement when it was seen that a mistake had been made.

All the notable personalities arrive before three o'clock, and everyone is waiting for His Majesty the King. Meanwhile arrives the party from Mar Lodge, including Prince and Princess Arthur of Connaught, Lord and Lady Maud Carnegie, the Countess of Londesborough, and Major Alexander.

And now appeared the two scarlet-coated outriders who precede the Royal carriage, drawn by four perfectly magnificent grey horses. Tremendous cheers from every one of probably twenty thousand throats and the sounding of hundreds of motor-horns, provided such a demonstration of faithful loyalty as can only be accorded to a sovereign of the personal prestige and popularity of our noble King, George V.

The Marquis of Aberdeen, Lord-Lieutenant of

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

the County, Colonel Farquharson, and Captain Mackintosh receive the Royal party, who walk up the gentle green slope to the pavilion, and there witness the feats of the brawny athletes and listen to the pipers in the midst. In attendance on their Majesties were Lord Claud Hamilton, Lady Bertha Dawkins, Sir John Gilmour, General Sir William Peyton, and Miss Agnes Keyser, for so many years closely associated with the intimate inner life of the Royal Household. It was noted with great regret that Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal was unable to be present, but as the foreword to this volume comes from her ever kindly and gracious hand, we are assured that her interest in the Gathering continues as heretofore.

His Majesty then took the salute of the Highlanders as they marched past, and the galvanizing spectacle this ceremony provides will never be forgotten by the thousands of His Majesty's subjects who were fortunate enough to witness it.

Presentations follow through the afternoon, and include the Marquis and Marchioness of Huntly, the Baroness Bentinck, Lady Burnett of Leys, Mr. C. M. Barclay-Harvey, M.P., and his wife, Mr. John Gauld, Chief Constable of Aberdeenshire, and Mr. Seton-Gordon, the well-known naturalist, author, and judge of piping, with whom His

FEATS

Majesty had a long conversation. It is said Mr. Seton-Gordon accomplished a walk of forty miles on this occasion, coming as he did with Captain Wolrige-Gordon, from Kyle of Lochalsh, by way of the Cairngorms, and over Ben Macdhui, to the Games and back again.

With Captain William Mackintosh His Majesty had also a long conversation, who on this occasion appeared for the last time at the head of the Duff Highlanders, owing to his imminent retirement from the office of Commissioner to the Fife estates. He had marched past three sovereigns, and bade farewell to his clansmen at the close of the day's proceedings. In his concluding remarks he assured them that the Princess Royal every year complimented them on their splendid turn-out at the Gathering.

The heat of the day gave a good deal of work to the detachment of local nurses and Boy Scouts, and numerous cases of injuries to the eyes were dealt with, caused by the emission of petrol vapour from motors. Ladies fainting from the heat were promptly restored.

Appended is the list of prize-winners:—

BRAEMAR GAMES WINNERS, 1926

Bagpipe Music.—Piobaireachd—1, Pipe-Major Ross; 2, P.M. Reid; 3, P.M. M'Lellan; 4, P.M. W. M'Donald. Heavy Stone (Society)—1, D. K. Michie, 25 feet 2 inches; 2, J. Davidson, 24 feet 6½ inches; 3, Ian Grant; 4, F. Grassick;

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

Strathspeys and Reels (open)—1, P.M. M'Lennan; 2, P.M. Ross; 3, P.M. M'Donald; 4, P.M. Reid. Throwing 16 lb. Hammer (Society)—1, J. Davidson, 100 feet 11 inches; 2, J. Kennedy, 99 feet 4 inches; 3, J. Gilbert; 4, Ian Grant. Half-Mile Race (open)—1, B. Smith; 2, R. Bennet; 3, J. Drummond; 4, J. Edward. Tossing Caber (Society)—1, F. Grassick; 2, D. K. Michie and Ian Grant (equal); 3, J. Davidson.

Putting 16 lb. Ball (open)—1, R. Starkey, 40 feet 9 inches; 2, M. Michie, 39 feet 8 inches; 3, J. Graham; 4, J. Maitland. Throwing 16 lb. Hammer (open)—1, J. Maitland, 112 feet 10 inches; 2, R. Starkey, 105 feet 10 inches; 3, G. Clark, 104 feet 1 inch; 4, W. W. Ferguson, 101 feet 2 inches. Sword Dance—1, S. Black; 2, J. J. M'Kenzie; 3, J. Beattie; 4, R. Cowan. Putting Stone (28 lb.)—1, R. Starkey, 28 feet; 2, J. Graham, 27 feet 5 inches; 3, J. Nicholson, 27 feet 1 inch; 4, M. Michie, 26 feet 9½ inches. High Leap—1, J. Edwards, 5 feet 6 inches; 2, W. Lenie, 5 feet 5 inches; 3, G. Aitken; 4, J. Gilbert. Highland Reel (open)—1, R. Cuthbertson; 2, S. Black; 3, J. L. M'Kenzie; 4, C. J. Milligan. 200 yards Race—1, J. Edwards, 22 seconds; 2, G. Taylor; 3, R. Bennet; 4, J. Drummond. Throwing 28 lb. Weight—1, J. Maitland, 62 feet 8 inches; 2, R. Starkey, 61 feet 9½ inches; 3, W. W. Ferguson; 4, J. Graham, 55 feet 6 inches. Vaulting with Pole—1, J. Cameron and A. Sinclair (equal), 10 feet 3 inches; 3, D. Tulloch and A. Lawson (equal), 10 feet 1 inch.

Dancing Highland Fling—1, R. Cuthbertson; 2, J. L. M'Kenzie; 3, S. Black; 4, J. A. Gordon. Tossing Caber—1, J. Nicholson; 2, R. Starkey; 3, Maitland and Michie (equal). Bagpipe Music—Marches—1, P.M. Reid; 2, P.M. M'Lennan; 3, P.M. Ross; 4, P.M. M'Donald. Throwing the Hammer (22 lb.)—1, J. Maitland, 90 feet 6 inches; 2, R. Starkey, 83 feet 7 inches; 3, G. Clark, 83 feet 4 inches; 4, W. W. Ferguson. Hop, Step, and Leap—1, J. Edwards,



LOCHABER AXES ON BRIDGE AT BRAEMAR

Photo. Topical

FEATS

41 feet 2 inches; 2, W. Lenie, 41 feet; 3, Hector; 4, Cruickshank. Dancing, Hulachan—1, Cuthbertson; 2, S. Black; 3, J. L. M'Kenzie; 4, J. Beattie. Quarter-Mile Race (local and society)—1, W. Gray; 2, W. Croll; 3, R. Milne; 4, J. Gilbert. Throwing 56 lb. Weight—1, J. Maitland, 32 feet 1 inch; 2, W. Ferguson, 31 feet 3 inches; 3, R. Starkey; 4, J. Nicholson. Two Miles Race—1, B. Smith; 2, R. Bennet; 3, F. Tate; 4, Hector. Dancing, Seann Trubhais—1, J. L. M'Kenzie; 2, Cuthbertson; 3, S. Black; 4, Cowan.

Wrestling (Cumberland style)—1, J. Nicholson; 2, R. Starkey; 3, G. Clark; 4, Ian Grant. Clansmen's Race (over 55 years)—1, J. Duncan; 2, G. Beddie; 3, D. Grant; 4, C. M'Intosh. Best Dressed Highlander—1, W. Collie; 2, W. Duncan. Oldest Clansman on Parade—Arthur Grant, 76 years. Length of Service—John Lamond, 40 years.

—*Dundee Courier and Advertiser*, 10th Sept., 1926.

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

NOTE *re* LOCHABER AXES

It is on record that the Town Guard of Edinburgh were, until a late period, armed with this weapon when on police-duty. There was a hook at the back of the axe, which the ancient Highlanders used to assist them to climb over walls, fixing the hook upon them and raising themselves by the handle. The axe, which was also much used by the natives of Ireland, is supposed to have been introduced into both countries from Scandinavia.



JOHN MACPHERSON, ESQ., J.P., OFFICER OF BRAEMAR

II—BRAEMAR ROYAL HIGHLAND SOCIETY

By JOHN MACPHERSON, J.P.

This venerable Society, whose annual gathering is now recognized as the leading event in the Scottish holiday season, and the only event in Scotland which is annually patronized by Royalty, was first instituted in January, 1816, as the Braemar Wrights' Society, under the presidency of William Farquharson, Esq., of Monaltrie.

In 1826 it was reconstituted as the Braemar Highland Society. The members then began to wear the Highland costume at all their meetings : each member wearing his own clan tartan, as Farquharson, Gordon, Lamont, MacGregor, etc.

Besides the above named Mr. Farquharson of Monaltrie, the Earl of Fife and Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld now began to take an interest in the Society, and regularly patronized its annual sports. In the year 1832 an event happened which gave a considerable impetus to its activities. The Marquis of Caermarthen (afterwards Duke of Leeds) took a nineteen years' lease of Mar Forest, north of the Dee, together with the adjoining forest of the Bachan and Slugan Glen on the Invercauld estate. He at once

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

began to take a keen interest in the affairs of the Society.' He presented each of his gamekeepers and retainers with a complete Highland costume of his own Dunblane tartan (Viscount Dunblane being one of his subsidiary titles) and carefully drilled them so that they might present a smart appearance. His example was shortly followed by the Earl of Fife and Mr. Farquharson of Invercauld, who presented each of the members residing on the remaining portion of their Braemar estates with a costume of their own clan tartan, Duff and Farquharson respectively.

General Sir Alexander Duff of Delgaty, brother of the fourth Earl of Fife, took a great interest in the Duff Highlanders, and spent many hours in drilling them, so that they might acquit themselves creditably when on parade.

In this year, 1832, the first athletic competitions of the Society are recorded. The events were five in number, the first prize-winners being :—

1. Putting the Stone—John MacGregor.
2. Throwing the Hammer—Peter MacHardy.
3. Tossing the Caber—William MacHardy.
4. Running—James Shewan.
5. Length of Service—John Bowman.

In 1832 only £5 was given in prizes for the five

BRAEMAR ROYAL HIGHLAND SOCIETY.

events. In 1926 there was fifty-eight events and over £200 in prizes.

The Braemar Annual Gathering yearly gained in popularity; but the event which gave it the greatest impetus was the coming of Queen Victoria and the Royal Family to Balmoral in 1848.

By the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Farquharson of Invercauld, the Gathering that year was held at Invercauld House, on the 14th of September. The Royal party arrived at Balmoral on the 8th September, and the Queen, the Prince Consort and the principal ladies and gentlemen of the Court honoured the Gathering with their presence.

The Duff, the Farquharson, the Atholl and the Duke of Leeds' Highlanders were present in full force, together with a number of county gentlemen.

The following year, 1849, the Gathering was held on the 6th September at Braemar Castle, when Her Majesty the Queen, Prince Albert and other noble ladies and gentlemen from Balmoral were present; besides many of the county nobility from Aberdeenshire, Perthshire and Forfarshire. Amongst others, the Duke of Atholl and Sir Charles Forbes of Newe, who both brought squadrons of Highlanders, dressed in their respective clan tartans. These Atholl and Forbes Highlanders continued to attend the gathering for many years, camping out on the night previous

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

and the night following the event. The Queen contributed generously towards the prize fund, and ever after took a deep interest in the welfare of the Society.

In the year 1859 the members of the Society were invited by the Queen to a special Highland gathering held at Balmoral on the 22nd September, at which she gave valuable prizes. Those who were present looked back with pleasure to that day for the rest of their lives. Amongst the many beautiful trophies presented by Her Majesty on that day was a handsome silver-mounted horn snuff-box, won by the late George Hutchinson, Balnellan, for tossing the caber, which is still preserved by his relatives.

After this, by kind invitation of the good Queen, the Gathering was held no fewer than four times at Balmoral; namely in the years 1887, 1890, 1898 and 1899.

At the annual meeting of the Society, on the 20th July, 1900, a message was submitted from Her Majesty, expressing her wish that no gathering be held that year, on account of the great loss of life in the South African War. Her Majesty's request was acceded to unanimously. This simple act showed the kind motherly heart of the good Queen. It was the last message she sent to the Society; for she was destined to see Braemar no more. Worn out with anxiety and sorrow for the fearful bloodshed in

BRAEMAR ROYAL HIGHLAND SOCIETY

Africa, which she was powerless to avert, her long and useful life came to a close. She passed peacefully away on the 22nd January, 1901. May her fragrant memory ever abide.

In the year 1903 the Gathering was held in Cluny Park, Invercauld. His Majesty King Edward was present, accompanied by the present King's two eldest sons, or, as the homely King jocularly expressed it, "The Duke o' York's twa loons" (now the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York).

During the nine years of his reign King Edward the Peacemaker continued to take a lively interest in the affairs of the Society, and contributed handsomely to its prize fund.

In 1905 the late Duke of Fife presented about twelve acres of ground in Auchindryne to the Society, which was laid out as a park, and here the annual gathering has since been held.

The good King Edward's reign was all too short, for he passed away in May, 1910. His occupancy of the throne, though brief, was peaceful and happy.

Their Majesties King George and Queen Mary, however, since their accession, have taken an equally keen interest in the Gathering, and have rarely been absent from it. In fact it is the principal social event in Scotland at which their Majesties are expected to be present.

III—THE LUSS GATHERING

By SIR IAIN COLQUHOUN, Bt., D.S.O., *Chieftain,*
Lord-Lieutenant of Dumbartonshire

The Luss Highland Gathering affords an excellent example of one of the smaller gatherings which, although largely local in the matter of attendance, became widely known for the excellent sport it provided, and for the presence of the most famous athletes from every part of Scotland.

The first gathering, held in 1875, owed its inception to the enthusiasm of several farmers and local sportsmen, all of whom belonged to the Luss Company of the Dumbartonshire Volunteers. This Company, clad in the Colquhoun tartan, and commanded by Geordie Colquhoun (Shemore), was a very popular and efficient unit of the battalion.

The Committee included Messrs. Geordie Colquhoun, James Lennox, Wm. MacGregor, John Galbraith and Robert McNab, with James MacIndoe as Secretary and Sir James Colquhoun of Luss as Chief. The Committee was a very influential one, all its members being well known and greatly respected men.

The first Saturday in September was selected for



SIR IAIN COLQUHOUN CONGRATULATING ARCHIE CAMERON
on winning the Hill Race at Luss when over 60 years old. Sir Iain's Piper
Macfarlane is in the background

Facing p. 90

THE LUSS GATHERING

the date, and the games proved an unqualified success; the presence of the noted athlete, J. Fleming, who won all the open heavy events, added greatly to the interest of the day.

The games, which were well supported by shooting tenants and other local gentlemen, were held for three years in a field north of the River Luss, but as they became rapidly very popular, the site was changed to the larger field on the south side, where they have been held ever since.

A more beautiful or romantic position for a Highland gathering could hardly have been chosen. The River Luss bounds one side with Loch Lomond in the background, whilst the wooded policies of Camstraddan and the rugged Luss Hills (up which the shepherds scramble in their annual race) complete a picture with which Doctor Johnson himself could hardly have found fault.

I have been greatly touched by the appreciation of the scenery which athletes from far and near have shown. Few of them to whom I have spoken but have expressed to me their pleasure in competing in such an ideal spot.

In the early days the Gathering was naturally for all the local people the great day of the year, and from early morn, from hill and glen, the farmers and shepherds would make their way to the village on

HIGHLAND GATHERING AT LUSS.

ON

FRIDAY, 18th AUG., 1893,

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF

Sir James Colquhoun, of Colquhoun and Luss, Bart.,

AND OTHER COUNTY GENTLEMEN.

Admission to Park, - - - One Shilling.

CHILDREN UNDER TEN YEARS, THREEPENCE.

CARRIAGES WITH 4 HORSES (17 Occupants), - - 25s Each.

Do. 2 „ (7 „), - - 10s „

Do. 1 HORSE (4 „), - - 5s „

Carriages containing a larger number of Ladies and Gentlemen will, in addition to the above charges, pay One Shilling for each extra Occupant.

GRAND STAND TICKETS, 2s 6d ; RING SEATS, 1s.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

BENNETT & THOMSON, PRINTERS. DUMBARTON.

LOCAL

	PRIZES-1ST.	2ND.	3RD.
1. High Leap (running).	20s	10s	5s
2. Long Leap (standing).	15s	7s 6d	5s
3. Long Leap (running).	15s	7s 6d	5s
4. Hop, Step, and Leap, or two hops.	15s	7s 6d	5s
5. Heavy Ball.	20s	10s	5s
6. Light Ball.	20s	10s	5s
7. Hammer.	20s	10s	5s
8. 100 Yards' Race.	20s	10s	5s
9. Boys' Race (under 16 entry free).	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
10. Hurdle Race (Twice Round).	15s	7s 6d	5s
11. <i>Bona fide</i> Mixed Shopkeepers' Race.	20s	10s	5s
12. Boys' Race (under 12 entry free).	5s	3s	1s
13. Half-mile Race.	20s	10s	5s
14. Boys' Race (under 14 entry free).	5s	4s	2s
15. Hurdle Sack Race (Committee provide Sacks).	15s	7s 6d	5s
16. One Mile Race.	30s	10s	5s

TUG OF WAR (CONFINED TO DUMBERTONSHIRE)

First Prize, £5, Second, £3; Third, £2. Standing Posture Teams to be composed of Eight Men a-side, and each Team confined to Parishes within the County of Dumfries. Entry Free if made not later than Wednesday, 16th August; but Entries allowed up till 12 Noon on day of Gathering on payment of 2s 6d. Spikes, Hand-over-hand Pulling, or Grip Shifting not allowed. Before and after Competition, Teams must keep out of the Ring, otherwise they will disqualify themselves from taking Prizes. The Committee or Umpires appointed by them shall have full control over the Teams, and they alone shall be Judges of the Competitions. This Rule to be most strictly enforced.

LOCAL.

	PRIZES-1ST.	2ND.	3RD.	4TH.	5TH.
Best Pair Hoes, Knitted.	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
Best Pair Socks, Knitted.	15s 6d	7s 6d	5s	3s	2s

The Winners will be indicated by Flag—1st, Red; 2nd, White; 3rd, Blue; 4th, Yellow; 5th, Green.

1st, August, 1893.

JAS. WINDOE, Hon. Secy.

OPEN

	PRIZES-1ST.	2ND.	3RD.	4TH.	5TH.	6TH.
17. Heavy Ball.	40s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s
18. Hammer.	40s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s
19. Caber.	40s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s
20. Scotch Wrestling (all Weights).	100s	40s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d
21. Pole Vaulting.	30s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s
22. Wrestling, Cumberland Style (all Weights).	100s	40s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d
23. Wrestling, Cumberland Style (11 stones & under).	50s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s
24. High Leap (running).	30s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s
25. One Mile Handicap Race.	30s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s
26. Two Mile Handicap Race.	30s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s
27. Handicap Race (one and a half round).	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s	5s
28. Hop, Step, and Leap, or two hops.	25s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s	5s
29. Light Ball.	25s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s	5s
30. Fibroth Playing (to commence at 10 A.M.).	50s	30s	20s	10s	5s	2s 6d
31. March Playing.	30s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
32. Reel Playing.	30s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
33. Highland Fling Dancing.	30s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
34. Do. for Boys under 14.	15s	10s	5s	2s 6d	1s	5s
35. Ghillie Callum.	30s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
36. Reel Dancing.	30s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
37. Sailor's Hornpipe.	25s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
38. Irish Jig.	25s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
39. Shean Trenbails.	20s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d
40. Consolation Race.	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d	1s	5s

K N I T T I N G .

	PRIZES-1ST.	2ND.	3RD.	4TH.	5TH.
Best Pair Hoes, Knitted.	30s	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s
Best Pair Socks, Knitted.	15s	10s	7s 6d	5s	2s 6d

FRIDAY, 14TH AUGUST, 1908.

HIGHLAND GATHERING AT LUSS,

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF

SIR ALAN COLQUHOUN of Colquhoun and Luss, Bart., K.C.B.,

AND OTHER COUNTY GENTLEMEN.

Admission to Park, One Shilling.

CHILDREN UNDER TEN YEARS, THREEPENCE.

Carriages with 4 Horses—17 Occupants,	-	-	25s each.
Motor Cars,	17	"	25s "
Carriages with 2 Horses	7	"	10s "
Motor Cars,	7	"	10s "
Carriages with 1 Horse	4	"	5s "
Motor Cars,	4	"	5s "

CARRIAGES AND MOTOR CARS CONTAINING A LARGER NUMBER OF LADIES AND GENTLEMEN WILL, IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE CHARGES, PAY 1s. FOR EACH EXTRA OCCUPANT.

Grand Stand Tickets, 2s 6d ; Ring Seats, 1s.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

PROGRAMME.

LOCAL.

	PRIZES—1st	2nd	3rd		OPEN.	PRIZES—1st	2nd	3rd
1. High Leap (running),	15/	7/6	5/	13. Heavy Ball,	-	-	30/	10/
2. Long Leap (running),	-	15/	7/6	14. Hammer,	-	-	30/	10/
3. Hop, Step, and Leap (or Two Hops),	-	15/	7/6	15. Caber,	-	-	30/	10/
4. Light Ball,	-	15/	7/6	16. Scotch Wrestling (all Weights),	-	-	30/	20/
5. Hammer,	-	15/	7/6	17. Do.	(14 Stones and under),	-	30/	10/
6. 100 Yards Race,	-	15/	7/6	18. Pole Vaulting,	-	-	30/	10/
7. Hurdle Race (Twice Round),	-	15/	7/6	19. High Leap (running),	-	-	30/	10/
8. Boys' Race (under 12, entry free),	-	15/	7/6	20. One Mile Handicap Race,	-	-	40/	10/
9. Half-mile Handicap Race,	-	4/	3/	21. 440 Yards Handicap Race,	-	-	30/	10/
10. Boys' Race (under 14, entry free),	-	15/	10/	22. 220 Yards Handicap Race,	-	-	80/	10/
11. Hurdle Sack Race (Committee provide Sacks),	-	6/	3/	23. Hop, Step, and Leap (or Two Hops),	-	-	25/	15/
12. Bolster Bar (for Boys under 16),	-	5/	4/	24. Pitroch Playing (to commence at 10 a.m. prompt),	50/	30/	20/	20/
				25. Highland Fling Dancing,	-	30/	15/	5/
				26. Do. for Boys under 16,	-	-	20/	10/
				27. Do. for Girls under 16,	-	-	20/	10/
				28. Gillie Callum,	-	-	30/	15/
				29. Reel Dancing,	-	-	30/	15/
				30. Do. for Boys,	-	-	16/	10/
				31. Sailors' Hornpipe,	-	-	20/	10/
				32. March Playing,	-	-	30/	15/
				33. Reel Playing,	-	-	30/	15/

A Handsome Prize will be given for

A HILL RACE FOR SHEPHERDS.

Local Competition only.

The Winners will be indicated by Flags—1st, Red; 2nd, White; 3rd, Blue.

K N I T T I N G.

LOCAL.	PRIZES—1st	2nd	3rd	4th		OPEN.	PRIZES—1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Best Pair Hose, Hand Knitted (Alloo Yarn),	15/6	10/6	7/6	5/6	Best Pair Hose, Hand Knitted,	-	-	20/	15/	10/
Best Pair Sox, Hand Knitted (Fingering 4-Ply),	12/6	7/6	5/	3/	Best Pair Sox, Hand Knitted,	-	-	20/	15/	10/
Two Special Prizes will be given by Mr Lumsden of Arden (Open to Dumbartonshire) for Gentlemen's Knitted Neckties.										

GROOKS AND WALKING STICKS.

LOCAL.	PRIZES—1st	2nd		LOCAL.	PRIZES—1st	2nd
Shepherds' Crooks,	-	10/	7/6	Plain Walking Sticks,	-	10/
Fancy Crooks,	-	10/	7/6	Fancy Walking Sticks,	-	10/
Special Prize will be given by Mr Lumsden of Arden for the Best Shepherd's Crook; also for Best Plain Walking Stick shown.						
The Exhibitor must be resident in the Parishes of Luss or Arrochar, or Landward part of Row Parish.						

ROSSGARDEN, Luss, July, 1908.

ARCHIBALD WILSON, Hon. Secy. and Treas.

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

foot, horseback, or in farm cart; to be reinforced at a later hour by every form of vehicle from the four-in-hand brake to the humblest type of "machine," whilst the crude English tongue would be almost superseded by the infinitely more beautiful Gaelic.

On arrival at the ground all vehicles were parked in a circle round the roped enclosure, and it is on record that at one meeting the circle was three deep. The occupants had therefore a comfortable seat and an excellent view of the sports field. Prices were charged on a basis of so much for a two-horse and so much for a four-horse machine. At one gathering a large four-horse brake from the Vale of Leven drew up before reaching the ground, unyoked two horses, and attempted to enter the field at the lower price. On this being reported to Geordie Colquhoun, he expressed himself with such fluency that the driver was heard voicing the opinion that the only two-horsed vehicle which could get in unchallenged would be Elijah's chariot.

All the great Highland athletes competed at one time or another at Luss, but the one who holds the highest place in the hearts of his countrymen, from whence he will never be dethroned, is Donald Dinnie.

His first appearance at Luss created great interest, and I have heard many of the older men of the village affirm that Dinnie in those days was the finest

LUSS (Loch Lomond) HIGHLAND GATHERING

IN GAMES PARK, LUSS.

On SATURDAY, 19th June, 1926.

Commencing at 11 a.m. prompt.

Sir IAIN COLQUHOUN, Bart., D.S.O., Chieftain.

Patrons—

Sir Geo. Hector Leith Buchanan, Bart., Ross Priory, Balloch.
James R. Lumsden, Esq., of Arden.
John Somerville, Esq., Camstradden, Luss.
Provost J. F. Duncan, Helensburgh.
William Russell, Esq., J.P., Ard-Luss, Helensburgh.
Charles M'Arthur, Esq., Stuckgowan, Tarbet
David J. Hamilton, Esq., Auchenheglish, Alexandria.
D. K. Somerville, Esq., Gowanlea, Helensburgh.
Dugald Cameron, Esq., Langdale, Drumchapel.
Major W. Leckie Cuning, Alexandria.

Field Steward— • ANDREW COLQUHOUN, Jun.

Clerk of Course— • H. CRAIG DAVIE, M.C.

SECTION No. 1—Highland Dancing, Bagpipe Playing. Judges—
Major M'Kinlay, Mr Francis Caird, Mr N. K. M'Kenzie.

SECTION No. 2—Heavy Events—Tossing the Caber, Putting
the Ball, etc. Stewards in attendance—Robert Kerr and
Inspector M'Aulay, V.C.

SECTION No. 3—Jumping, Hop, Step and Leap, etc. Stewards
in attendance—Donald Jack and A. Taylor.

SECTION No. 4—Foot Races. Judges—Mr John Somerville,
Mr William Russell, and Mr John Galbraith.
Steward in attendance—Major R. J. Reid.

Handicapper and Starter—Mr Thomas Durning.

Tug of War Teams. Judge—Sir Iain Colquhoun, Bart., D.S.O.

Steward in charge of Field Decorations, etc.—H. Craig Davie.

SPORTS COMMITTEE.

Sir IAIN COLQUHOUN Bart., D.S.O.

Mr Andrew Colquhoun, jun.	Mr Robert Kerr.
„ James H. Allan.	„ R. J. Reid.
„ H. Craig Davie, M.C.	„ A. Taylor.
„ Donald Jack.	„ John Galbraith.

Hon. Secy.—Andrew Colquhoun, jun., Hawthorn Cottage, Luss.

Hon. Treasurer—James H. Allan, Halfon Cottage, Luss.

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

specimen of manhood they had ever seen. From caber to high jump it was all the same to Donal'. One of his little affectations was to handicap himself by performing the high jump in the kilt. On one occasion, having knocked the cross-bar down on two successive attempts, he hurled his "philabeag" to the ground and soared over at his third effort clad only in an extremely abbreviated pair of tartan trews.

Wrestling was always a great feature of the Gathering, and the styles of Steadman, Currie, Alec Munro and other giants of the game were well known to the Luss people, whilst the famous exponents of the hammer, ball and caber from A. A. Cameron downwards have competed regularly there.

The games field is not very suitable for running, being rough and hummocky, but great runners like McLeavey (Vale of Leven), champion at any distance from one to ten miles, and after him Peter Cannon of Stirling, have often delighted the Luss audience by the ease and grace of their movements.

Among the great masters of our national instrument, no names are held in higher esteem in Luss than those of John McColl and MacDougall Gillies, and when their competing days were past, their presence as judges inspired and encouraged the young pipers who were endeavouring to follow in their footsteps.

THE LUSS GATHERING

The year 1896 is a black one in the annals of the Gathering, for when the great day arrived a perfect deluge descended. At eleven a.m. the ground was flooded and there were two feet of water round the marquees. The sports were abandoned and a spirited argument ensued with the competitors, who demanded their money back. A man was seen escaping from beneath the luncheon tent with a large boiled salmon under his arm. On being challenged by the police, he explained he had killed it with a stick under the grandstand.

A military band was generally in attendance, and in some years a company of the Maryhill Garrison would perform gymnastics, etc.

In the local competitions a high standard was always maintained, and names far too numerous to mention are well remembered in the parish.

Among the more prominent were A. Jardine and John Jardine, John MacFarlane, John Stewart, Willie McCallum, Dugald McCallum and the Cameron Brothers from Glen Luss—Willie, James and Archie.

Archie competed regularly in many races for over thirty years, and in 1925 won the hill race when over sixty. He carries a medal presented by the Committee of the Luss Gathering commemorating his long and successful record as a competitor.

Sometimes a competition in Gaelic singing would

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

take place, in which John McColl (Oban) and Donald McInnes and Duncan McCorquodale, both local, were prominent. There was also a competition for the best made shepherd's crooks, in which Willie McCallum (Tarbet) and Willie McCallum (Luss) invariably carried all before them.

A feature of the Gathering was the luncheon to which the chief, Sir James Colquhoun, entertained his clansmen and their friends. They were piped into the large marquee by the most successful piper, generally John McColl. It was largely attended, as the Colquhouns are one of the few clans who have never left their own country, and to this day I do not think I should be far wrong in saying there are as many of that name in the parish of Luss as in the rest of Scotland.

A familiar and greatly loved figure at the gatherings was "Daft Tosh." Tosh thought he was a police officer, and the kindly village constables would give him any cast-off police clothing, helmets, etc., they could lay hands on. During the year Tosh would keep copious notes of any misdemeanours which occurred in the village.

At the Gathering the Chief Constable invariably had him summoned into the ring, where, after inspecting the notebook, he publicly congratulated Tosh on the fine order he had maintained in the village. A



FINAL OF TUG-OF-WAR AT LUSS. COLQUHOUNS V. ARDEN

THE LUSS GATHERING

“prood man” was Tosh that day. He died many years ago, lamented by all.

The two chief judges for many years were Peter Weir and Chief Constable McHardy. Two finer types of Highland gentlemen could not be found. Fluent Gaelic speakers, with the love of their country as the great impetus of their lives, they were beloved and respected wherever they went.

On the retirement of James MacIndoe as secretary, the duties were taken over by James Wilson of Rossarden. His enthusiasm and keenness knew no bounds, and for many years he was the moving spirit in all that pertained to the good of the Gathering. On the death of Sir James Colquhoun, the post of chieftain was taken over by Sir Alan Colquhoun, who took a warm interest in the Annual Gathering.

The Loch Lomond steamboats are the main means of transit to and from Luss. In 1912 they refused to run special steamers for the Gathering unless a large number of passengers were guaranteed. The Committee could not see their way to accede to this demand, and the Gathering remained in abeyance from 1912 until 1921, having run continuously since 1875, a period of thirty-six years.

The old minute books and records referring to the Luss Gathering have unfortunately been lost, and for much of the earlier information I am indebted to

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

my friends, Andrew Colquhoun, John McKellar, Sandy McInnes, John MacFarlane and Donald MacFarlane, all of Luss, whose courtesy and accurate memories have enabled me to tabulate much of interest which would otherwise have been lost sight of.

The largest attendance recorded was just over four thousand.

After the war a post of the British Legion was formed in Luss, and in 1922 the Committee of the post inaugurated a local sports meeting, which, in spite of a postponement owing to bad weather, proved very successful.

Encouraged by this success the Committee determined to resuscitate the Luss Gathering, and with this object in view sent round an appeal for subscriptions. A splendid response was met with, the farmers and people of the parish subscribing most generously.

In 1923 the competitions were reserved to the parishes of Luss, Arden, Glen Fruin, and Arrochar, with an open class for juvenile dancing and piping.

The following year the programme was greatly extended, eighteen events being thrown open to the County of Dumbarton.

The Committee, which included Sandy Taylor, Donald Jack, Reverend A. S. Dunlop, A. Reid, Robert Kerr, Harry Davie (treasurer), Andrew

THE LUSS GATHERING

Colquhoun, junior (secretary) and Sir Iain Colquhoun, chieftain, all ex-service men, now felt themselves in a position to promote the open gathering. This, therefore, took place on June 20th, 1925, and proved in every way a success. There were seventeen open events, sixteen events confined to nine parishes, and nine juvenile events confined to Luss.

The Gathering in 1926 was held on the 19th June, and suffered in attendance on account of the coal strike. The Loch Lomond steamers were not running, and the audience of about two thousand was conveyed largely by chars-à-bancs.

In these two years the games were notable for the keen competitions in the open heavy events, and there was probably a finer selection of prominent Highland athletes competing at Luss than at any other Highland gathering.

The present Committee, which consists of Harry Davie, Robert Kerr, Sandy Taylor, Donald Jock, John Galbraith, Andrew Colquhoun (secretary), James Allan (treasurer), and Sir Iain Colquhoun (chieftain), have given every encouragement to local athletes, and the confined events are always keenly contested.

At the last two gatherings Constable A. Weir (Renton) gave a splendid display in the heavy events,

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

carrying off prizes in both open and confined competitions, whilst Douglas McGibbon, George Taylor, Peter Cameron and Sinclair Colquhoun, all of Luss, show great athletic promise.

A feature of the games in 1924 was the tug-of-war, in which a team of eight Colquhouns, all from the parish of Luss, headed by their chief and captained by Andrew Colquhoun, J.P., were only defeated in the final by a highly trained team from Arden.

The management of every Highland gathering has many difficulties to compete with at the present time. There are many other attractions; it is hard to avoid a clashing of dates, and the entertainment tax falls very heavily upon the smaller ones.

In spite of these difficulties the Luss Games retain their hold on popular affection and are splendidly supported by the local people.

The Committee organizes an annual Highland concert and annual Highland ball, and these are eagerly looked forward to.

Their great ambition is to preserve the old customs and the old character of the games, and to see that the modern Luss Highland Gathering shall be in no way inferior to the famous meetings in the past.



Photo. Sport and General

GENERAL VIEW OF INVERNESS GATHERING, 1926

IV—THE NORTHERN MEETING

“ The finest view of Inverness is from the height above Muirtown as you ascend Craig Phadrick, one of the eminences of that ridge, which conceals the Fraser country, or Aird.”—*Dr. John Leyden at Nairn, 11th September, 1800.*

EXTRACT FROM PROGRAMME, 1926

THE NORTHERN MEETING (INSTITUTED IN 1788)

Patrons :

HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

Colonel The Mackintosh of Mackintosh, C.B.E.

Sir Hector Munro of Foulis, Bart., A.D.C.

Convener :

Lieut.-Colonel Hugh Rose, C.M.G., etc., of Kilravock,
Gollanfield.

Stewards :

Provost of Inverness.

Colonel E. W. Horne of Stirkoke, C.M.G., C.B.E.

Sir Kenneth J. Mackenzie, Bart., of Gairloch., etc.

Brigadier-General Sir Walter Ross, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G.,
of Cromarty.

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

J. A. Grant, Esq., of Househill.

Colonel Hugh Rose of Kilravock, C.M.G., etc.

Major the Earl of Leven and Melville.

Lieut.-Colonel N. Fraser-Tytler, D.S.O., T.D., of Aldourie.

Captain John Stirling of Fairburn, Muir of Ord.

Colonel J. E. B. Baillie, M.V.O., V.D., of Dochfour.

R. L. Mackintosh, Esq., of Inshes.

G. B. Macpherson-Grant, Esq., of Craigo.

Major J. P. Grant, M.C., yr. of Rothiemurchus.

Major the Hon. Evan Baillie, M.C., yr. of Dochfour.

Earl Cawdor.

Colonel Mackenzie, C.M.G., M.V.O., of Ord.

General the Right Hon. Lord Lovat, K.T., K.C.V.O., C.B.,
D.S.O., A.D.C., Beaufort Castle, Beaulieu.

Admiral Sir Heathcoat Grant, of Boath, Auldearn.

Colonel Montagu J. Grant-Peterkin, O.B.E., of Grange,
Forres.

Captain Duncan George Davidson of Flemington,
Gollanfield.

Albert C. Macpherson, Esq., of Cluny, Cluny Castle,
Kingussie.

Sheriff Ronald Baillie, O.B.E., Jedbank, Jedburgh.

Secretary:

David Ross, 46 High Street, Inverness.

THE NORTHERN MEETING

THE NORTHERN MEETING CONVENERS

1818-1852	Lord Saltoun.	
1853-1887	Lord Lovat.	
1888	Lochiel.	
1890	R. G. Mackenzie, Flowerburn.	
1896-1908	Sir John Macpherson-Grant.	
1916	Sir Hector Munro	} Joint.
	General Ross	
1917-1919	General Ross	} Joint.
	Colonel Baillie	
1920-1924	General Sir Walter Ross.	
September 1924	to date, Colonel Rose of Kilravock.	

CHAPTER IV

SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE NORTHERN MEETING

At *Inverness*, the 11th *June*, 1788 — In a Meeting where the under-mentioned Gentlemen were present,

Colonel *Hugh Grant* of *Moy*,
Mr *Cumming* of *Altyre*,
Mr *MacLeod* of *Geanies*,
Mr *Munro* of *Culcarn*,
Mr *Fraser* of *Relick*,
Mr *Frazer* of *Culduthel*,
Captain *Alexander Mackenzie*, 71st.

✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠✠
Captain *William Wilson*, 39th.
Mr *Baillie* of *Dochfour*,
Captain *Gregor Grant*,
Baillie *Alexander Shaw*,
Lieutenant *John Rojs*,
And,
Doctor *John Alvet*,

They, after a Conversation at length on the Subject, came to the following Resolutions, viz.

1. THAT an ANNUAL MEETING of Gentlemen, Ladies, and their Families, shall hold in this Place for the Space of One Week, to commence on the last *Monday* of *October* first, and thereafter on the last *Monday* of *October* Yearly, and that for the Purpose of promoting a Social Intercourse.
2. That the Meeting shall be named the NORTHERN MEETING.
3. That a List be made out of those Gentlemen who it is thought would chuse to be Original Constituent Members of this Meeting, and that a Copy thereof and of the proposed Plan as hereafter expressed, shall be transmitted to each of the Gentlemen and Ladies therein named, with a Request, that they will, with their earliest Convenience, specify to the Secretary of the Meeting, whether they chuse to remain nominated Original Constituent Members, or decline the Offer.
4. That every Gentleman or Lady, being the Head of a Family, who is or shall become a Constituent Member of this Meeting, shall pay in to the Secretary, the Sum of ONE GUINEA Yearly, for the public Purposes of the Meeting; and that all such Members as shall absent themselves shall pay double that Sum, (excepting Officers below the Rank of Field-Officers, who may be necessarily absent on Duty.)
5. That out of this Fund, the Notices to the Members, the Printed Tickets of Admission to the Ball Room, the Music, Lights, Door Keepers, Tea and Negus at the Ball shall be paid; and that the Debutement thereof, shall be committed to the sole Charge of the Secretary and Stewards to be now named.
6. That this Meeting do name the Stewards and Secretary for the Year, and do accordingly nominate and appoint. *A. Penrose Cumming* of *Altyre*; *James Frazer* of *Culduthel*; *Edward Frazer* of *Relick*, and *Donald MacLeod* of *Geanies*, Elqs; to be Stewards for the first Meeting; and Doctor *John Alvet* Physician here to be Secretary.— That the whole Offices the Gentlemen being present did agree to accept.
7. That the whole Business of the Meeting, shall be conducted by the Stewards and Secretary, conformable to the General Regulations now laid down, or that may hereafter be resolved on. That they shall alternately act as Toast-master and Croupier at the Entertainments, and as Masters of the Ceremonies at the Ball Room; and that the whole Gentlemen and Ladies of the Meeting, shall support the Authority of the Stewards.
8. That a Book shall be immediately purchased and kept by the Secretary, in which these Regulations shall be entered, and all the future proceedings of the Meeting; and that the Gentlemen now present, do pay to the Secretary, their Subscription of a Guinea each, to enable him to get these Regulations, and the List of proposed Members Printed and distributed, which the Gentlemen present agreed to and paid accordingly.
9. That the whole Company, Ladies and Gentlemen, do Dine together, and that it is to be understood as a Regulation, that they do all come to Table dressed for the Ball in the Evening.
10. That the Company do meet and Dine the first Day at Mr *Beverly's Inn*; the following Day at Mr *Ettles's Hotel*, and thereafter at the Inns alternately.
11. That Dinner be on the Table each Day precisely by Four o'Clock. That the Ladies having retired, the Ball shall be called for by the Two Stewards, who do not act as Toast-master and Croupier for the Day, at Half past Six o'Clock, and be proportioned by them, and collected by the Secretary, as soon as it can be proportioned.
12. That in proportioning the Ball, all the Members present, shall, individually pay for their own Ordinary, and for that of every Lady they introduce; and that the Gentlemen shall pay equally, for the whole Liquors consumed.
13. That it shall be in the Power of the Stewards to introduce Strangers, both to the Entertainment and Ball; but not in the Power of any private Individual of the Meeting.
14. That the Ordinary, &c. of all Strangers introduced, shall be proportioned on the Members who are present at large, at the time of collecting the Bill.
15. That there shall be no Allowance for Servants of the Company, it being understood, that every Gentleman puts his Servants on Board Wages.
16. That immediately after the Bill is settled and paid, the Gentlemen do adjourn to the Ball Room.
17. That the Dancing do commence each Night precisely by Eight o'Clock, and stop precisely by Twelve.
18. That Mr *Cumming* of *Altyre*, be directed to write to Captain *Graham*, Master of the Ceremonies at *Filinburgh*, for a Copy of the Regulations adopted there, as to the order of Dancing and conduct of the Balls, and that they shall be adopted by this Meeting: a Copy of them to be Printed and hung up in the Public Rooms of each Inn, and in the Dancing Room.
19. That the Provost of *Inverness* be applied to, for the Use of the Town-Hall for the Balls, and the Room above for a Tea Room, by the Secretary in the Name of the Meeting.
20. That there shall be a Public Breakfast prepared next Morning, at the Inn where the Company dined the Day before, for as many Ladies and Gentlemen as chuse to resort there, at the Hour which will appear most agreeable to the Company.
21. That the Meeting shall commence on *Monday* the Twenty-Seventh of *October*, and continue to have an Entertainment and a Ball on that Day, the *Tuesday*, *Wednesday*, *Thursday*, and *Friday* following; and that on the Forenoon of *Saturday*, the Gentlemen of the Meeting, shall assemble at *Beverly's*, receive the Secretaries Accounts, chuse new Stewards and Secretary, appoint the following Years Meeting, determine any Petitions for Admission of New Members, and do any other Business that may respect the Meeting.
22. That those who wish to become Members after the Meeting is fully constituted, must apply by Petition, to be lodged with the Secretary, at least One Week before the first Day of Meeting annually; and the Question shall be determined by Ballot, of those Members who are in Town, the first Day immediately after the Ladies retire from Dinner; and that five Black Balls shall exclude any Person so Petitioning. That the Secretary do provide a Ballot Box and Balls, before the first Day of Meeting.
23. That no Subscription Paper for any public or private Work or Undertaking, shall, under any pretext whatever, be obtruded on the Company when met collectively; and that whoever pretumes to infringe on this Regulation, shall be subject to a Fine of *One Guinea*.
24. That as the Object of the Meeting is Pleasure and Innocent Amusement, and that it is thought the having One or more Packs of Hounds here, with which such Gentlemen as are so inclined, might hunt every Morning of the Meeting; Mr *Brodie* of *Archie*, and Mr *MacLeod* of *Geanies*, Members, be requested, the first to apply to His Grace the Duke of *Gordon*, and the latter to Sir *Hector Munro*, for the favour of permitting their Huntsmen and Packs to attend here during the Week of the Meeting, (provided they do accede to the Plan of the Meeting); that Gentlemen may hunt with them alternately.
- Thereafter, the Gentlemen present, made up a List of such Gentlemen belonging to the Three Counties, as they thought might chuse to accede to the Plan of Meeting, which was delivered to the Secretary to be classed by him and Printed.

CHAPTER IV

SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE NORTHERN MEETING

IN 1788 the Northern Meeting was instituted. On the 11th June that year a meeting was held at which were present Colonel Hugh Grant of Moy, Messrs. Cumming of Altyre, Macleod of Gramis, Munro of Culcairn, Fraser of Relick, Fraser of Culduthel, Baillie of Dochfour, Captains Alex. Mackenzie, 71st Regiment, William Wilson, 39th Regiment, Gregor Grant, Lieutenant John Rose, and Dr. John Alves (appointed first secretary). They formed the Society for an annual week of social intercourse, one guinea subscription for each head of a family, and any absentee to be fined two guineas. In the first year £40 came in from such fines, absence on duty being the sole excuse. The first stewards were Messrs. Cumming, the Frasers of Culduthel and Relick, and Macleod. No games were intended, only balls and dinners. The company dined together in full evening-dress, alternately at the hotels of Messrs. Beverley and Ettles, dancing from eight to twelve. Only stewards could invite strangers. The regula-

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

tions in force at Edinburgh were obtained from Captain Graham, M.C., in that city. The town hall was the place of dancing, with the room above, called the Guildry, for tea. A public breakfast was provided. Anyone producing a subscription paper before a full assembly was fined a guinea. The mornings seemed to require some occupation, so Brodie of Brodie and Macleod were deputed to invite the huntsmen and hounds of the Duke of Gordon and Sir Robert Munro of Foulis. About ninety members joined from the counties of Inverness, Ross, Nairn and Moray, and the date was the second week in October. Formal balls becoming rather too heavy, they were reduced to two, with undress dances and card parties to fill the gaps. The uniform worn, according to an old authority, was a grass green coat with buff edging, white metal buttons, black velvet cape with four silver embroidered or vellum button-holes; buff or fancy waistcoat, buff or black silk breeches, the buttons having N.M. engraved thereon. Truly a gay cavalcade for the Highland Capital! In 1810 the third week is selected, and by the desire of the Marquis of Huntly all members had to appear in blue coats from the Inverness Woollen Factory to stimulate local industry. The stewards now receive badges, then wands, then tartan sashes, and last, badges again.

ACCOUNT OF NORTHERN MEETING

In 1816 a plate of fifty guineas was given out of the funds for any horse carrying ten stone that had never won a plate (Hunter's Plate excepted); a special committee was appointed to provide the course at a cost of £20; but this did not continue for long as part of the programme. The course was at Duneancroy, but the tax on the funds being too much it was stopped. The present races are quite independent.

Games proper began in 1840, at first by private subscription, in the Academy Park, afterwards at the Longman Park. In the early sixties the present park was bought from the late Sir Alexander Matheson of Ardross and walled round. A pavilion, followed by a second, was subsequently added. The annual assemblies required their own room, so in Church Street ground was bought and erections built gradually. In 1801 this building was greatly damaged by fire. It was very near a candle factory, above which was a powder magazine! It is perhaps unnecessary to observe how lax the regulations on these matters must have been under good King George III!

Heat one day reached the powder, with the natural consequences, seven lives being lost and many persons injured. The factory itself was also damaged. The rooms had to be rebuilt, and in 1845 or thereabouts assumed the form in which they are to-day, but

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

internally they have been greatly improved since that date. Even in 1795 and subsequently the meeting continued, in spite of Napoleonic Wars; in 1796 we read of a "brilliant assembly of beauty and fashion."

Cholera prevents it in 1832, and the South African War in 1900, though in the latter year Highland sports were held on one day. No fines are now inflicted on absentees, and the terms of admission have often been changed. The uniform is a thing of the past, but Highland dress takes its place, the meeting being recognized as a prominent permanent festival and fashionable institution.

CHAPTER V
THE GALLANT MARQUIS

CHAPTER V

THE GALLANT MARQUIS

THE Northern Meeting in the first years of the nineteenth century was the culminatory point of the Highland season. And so it is to-day. "The famous Lady Jane, Duchess of Gordon," says Mr. James Barron, "was a prominent patron of this assembly, supported by her son, the Marquis of Huntly, and by one or other of those daughters who had made such brilliant marriages. Her Grace delighted to spend the autumn at Kinrara, enjoying the simple Arcadian life after the toils of London Society. Miss Elizabeth Grant of Rothiemurchus, afterwards Mrs. Smith of Baltiboy, describes the unpretending accommodation and the frank enjoyment of hostess and visitors. "Half the London world of fashion, all the clever people that could be hunted out from all parts, all the north country, all the neighbourhood from far and near, without regard to wealth and station, and all the kith and kin of both Gordons and Maxwells, flocked to this encampment

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in the wilderness during the fine autumns, to enjoy the free life, the pure air, and the wit and fun the Duchess brought with her to the mountains." She also says Lord Huntly was the life of social gatherings. "He was gay, young, handsome, fond of his mother, and often with her; and so general a favourite that all the people seemed to wake up when he came amongst them." The Duchess died in London in April, 1812, and her remains were brought north by her son, and interred in a sequestered spot chosen by herself, not far from Kinrara House. The Marquis was the last of his line. He married in 1813 Elizabeth Brodie, daughter of Brodie of Arnhall, but had no issue. In 1827, on the death of his father, he succeeded to the Dukedom, and to an encumbered property. Before his death in 1836, he had to part with Lochaber and a portion of his Badenoch estates. The late Dr. Carruthers, in his *Highland Notebook*, gives the following interesting reminiscences of the closing days of the "gay and gallant Marquis," after he had become Duke of Gordon:—

"There certainly never was a better chairman of a festive party. He could not make a set speech; and on one occasion, when Lord Liverpool asked him to move or second an address at the opening of a

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session of Parliament, he gaily replied that he would undertake to please all their lordships if they adjourned to the City of London Tavern, but he could not undertake to do the same in the House of Lords. He excelled in short, unpremeditated addresses, which were always lively and to the point. We heard him once on an occasion which would have been a melancholy one in any other hands. He had been compelled to sell the greater part of his property in the district of Badenoch, lessen the pressure of his difficulties, and emancipate himself in some measure from legal trustees. The gentlemen of the district, before parting with their noble landlord, resolved to invite him to a public dinner in Kingussie. A piece of plate, or some other mark of regard, would have been more *apropos* and less painful in its associations; but the dinner was given and received. Champagne flowed like water; the Highlanders were in the full costume of the mountains, and great excitement prevailed. When the Duke stood up, his tall, graceful form slightly stooping with age, and his grey hairs shading his smooth, bald forehead, with a general's broad riband across his breast, the thunders of applause were like a warring cataract or mountain torrent in flood. Tears sparkled in his eyes, and he broke with a hearty acknowledgment of the honours paid to him; he alluded to the

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time when he roamed their hills in youth, gathering recruits among their mountains for the service of his country—to the strong attachment which his departed mother entertained for every cottage and family among them—and to his own affection for the Highlands, which he said was as firm and lasting as the rock of Cairngorm which he was still proud to possess. The latter was a statement of fact; in the sale of the property the Duke had stipulated for retaining that wild mountain range called the Cairngorm Rocks. The effect of this short and feeling speech—so powerful is the language of nature and genuine emotion—was as strong as the most finished oration could produce.”

On the death of the nobleman who figures in this pathetic scene, the entailed estates—still a splendid patrimony—went to the Duke of Richmond, grandson of Duchess Jane, by her eldest daughter. The ancient title was revived in 1876, and the present venerable peer holds the honours of the Duke of Richmond and Gordon.

[This is really not an account of the Highlands as a whole, but only of those associated with the games at Inverness, which began in 1840, and therefore we only continue these personal details as being of those connected with them. To quote again from

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Mr. James Barron, there were three other great local proprietors who occupied prominent places, also experiencing their share of human troubles. The last Earl of Seaforth was of marked ability, triumphing from mental endowments over deafness and imperfect speech. Living in a lavish period, he was, at least for a time, a member of the extravagant circle round the Prince Regent. He was also involved in West Indian Plantations, which proved unprofitable, causing the sale of part of his property. After the death of his four sons, he died himself in 1815, a widowed daughter succeeding a broken-hearted father.

The Hon. Archibald Fraser of Lovat, last surviving son of Lord Simon, careful to business, was successful in his affairs. Proud of his Highland descent, he helped the Duke of Montrose to abolish the law forbidding the wear of Highland dress. Here again, his five sons predeceased him, and the succession proved to the Strichen branch of the family. Archibald died in 1815, eleven months after Lord Seaforth.

Then comes Macdonell of Glengarry, succeeding to and squandering a fine inheritance. His ambition was to be a Highland chief of the olden time, so far as possible. He moved about with a body of retainers, constituting his "tail." Always eager for

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the limelight, he possessed talent and many kindly qualities, but he could keep neither his temper under control, nor his expenditure under his income. He died in 1828, his estates passing from his family for financial reasons.

“ The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in Nature that is ours.”

—*Wordsworth.*

CHAPTER VI

FIFTY YEARS: 1807-1857

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FIFTY YEARS : 1807-1857

“ In the Highlands, in the country places,
Where the old plain men have rosy faces,
And the young fair maidens quiet eyes,
Where essential silence cheers and blesses,
And for ever in the hill recesses
Her more lovely music broods and dies.”
—R. L. Stevenson.

IN 1807, the date was October 12th, and it lasted one week. The Duchess of Gordon was absent, also Lord Seaforth from illness.

1808. The Duchesses of Gordon and Manchester were present on October 14th. There was a good support for the hounds, and the meeting was "numerously and respectably attended," in the language of the period. The Marquis of Huntly was energetic in entertaining the company. Having attended the Aberdeen Shooting Club earlier in that week, he rode one hundred and five miles in under seven hours to be present, having eight relays of horses on the road. Lord Seaforth presented a brace of fat bucks to the company.

1809. The attendance was small, owing to loss of life in the war. Duchess of Gordon present. Records refer to the "polished manners and dignified character" of the gathering. The stewards were Lords Huntly, Seaforth, and MacDonald, Colonel Fraser of Lovat, Sir Hector Mackenzie of Gairloch,

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Bart., Lewis Dunbar Brodie of Bunghie and Lette, Esq., Hugh Innes of Lochalsh, Esq., Thos. Gilzean, Esq., Provost of Inverness, Alex. McKenzie, Banker, Inverness, secretary and treasurer. Most of these were re-elected for the next year, with the addition of Colonel Francis W. Grant, Sir Wm. Gordon Cumming, Henry Davidson of Tulloch, and Ed. H. M'Kenzie of Cromartie, Esquires.

It is noted that a well-known piper, known locally as "Up and waur them a' Willie," embarked this year with the 71st Regiment for Portugal. He played on incessantly at the Battle of Vimiera, in spite of being wounded.

I have dealt with the year 1810 in the summary, and in 1811 we find the funds were in a good state. One hundred and forty ladies and gentlemen attended the dinner and two hundred the ball. There was a trotting match between a pony of Lord Huntly's and a horse of Mr. Forbes' of Culloden, the former winning. The course was six miles, done in twenty-three minutes, or at the rate of sixteen miles an hour. A curious note is made about a girl of eight years, Miss Paton, who for three years had officiated as a pianist. She was also asked to sing and recite, to which some members took exception on the score of cruelty.

In 1812 the date was October 30th, and the

outside sport was spoiled by bad weather. On the closing night Colonel Fraser gave a "select and numerous" party at his residence, "the Barracks," which lasted well into the following day. In 1813 there was a more numerous and elegant assemblage. Presents of venison were received from the Duke of Atholl and Lord Seaforth. Two hundred attended the supper. Lord Huntly presented to the meeting a portrait of his late mother, the Duchess of Gordon, although it had been the intention of the members to purchase this for themselves.

A young vocalist, Master Weeks, performed so creditably that Sir James Dunbar and some friends presented him with twenty guineas. About this time a well-known resident old lady lost 6d. and found it six weeks afterwards in the gizzard of one of her fowls! This was an improvement on the story of the lawyer who swallowed a sovereign. All they could extract from him was 13s. 4d.; in those days 6s. 8d. was the lowest fee chargeable.

In 1814 bad weather again prevailed, but the balls took place, and the time was spent in visiting. There was a great display of costly and varied equipages, parading the streets in gay profusion.

In 1815 some sort of Highland Society seems to have been formed, and it was suggested that there should be horse races at Duneancroy in connection

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with the meeting. Lord Huntly sent a turtle, Colonel Fraser game and a Spanish mutton, and Innes of Lochalsh a fine hart.

In connection with the gift of a turtle, it is interesting for those who have attended a lord mayor's banquet to recall some facts as to these sea-monsters. They sometimes weigh nearly 300 lb., and come mainly from the Caribbean Sea, being fed on the journey by young seaweed. The only part that is seen in the soup is the gelatinous flesh from the inner lining of the carapace, or outer shell. Other parts, of course, as well as other ingredients, such as spices and mysterious herbs, are used. The process of cutting up is rendered easy by the lines and ridges of the shell being reproduced as a diagram on the flesh. Turtles are considered young at eighty years of age, and the monsters of three hundredweight may have lived for three hundred years before their capture. The "fins" make splendid steak-meat for grilling, and soap is made from the oil in rejected parts. What is known to users of luxurious articles of toilet, etc., is the shell from the green turtle or "hawksbill," which is of no use for food.

This year the patron was asked to sit for his portrait, and another note is made that complaints were received about the ladies' dresses being crushed, and

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their bones being hurt from overcrowding. The staircases were also considered unsafe, and eventually it was decided that all titled ladies should be handed out of the building before the general egress was allowed.

Sportsmen in 1816 derived much amusement from the Inverness Harriers, and the racing is referred to on page 113. Those present on October 24th, 1817, included Lord and Lady Huntly, Lord and Lady Saltoun, Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth, Colonel and Mrs. Macdonald of Glengarry. The latter appeared in full Highland costume, with belted plaid, broadsword, pistols, dirk, etc. Horse races were held at Fort George, chronicled as a novelty, and much appreciated.

1. Plate value 50 guineas. An easy victory.
Mr. Fraser, Culduthel, b.g., Martin Luther—1. 1.
Mr. Gifford, b. mare, Louisa—2. 2.
2. A match for 30 guineas.
Mr. Sheppard's Bay Mare—1.
Captain Fraser's brown horse—2.
3. Sweepstake for a Subscription Purse.
Mr. Eache's horse—1.
Mr. McAndrew's b. mare—2.
Captain Sinclair's horse—3.

This year public dissatisfaction with the management is manifest in the columns of the press; the

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meeting was stated to be heavily in debt, although high prices were made for certain things, viz., 1s. 9d. for a cup of coffee. In 1818 on October 21st, the Huntlys, Mackenzies, and Frasers of Lovat sent large supplies of venison, muirfowl and ptarmigan. Arrears of subscription were called in, and Mr. Mackenzie remained secretary.

The year 1819 was under the chairmanship of Lord Saltoun, and there was a long discussion as to the secretaryship, but Mr. Mackenzie was re-appointed eventually. A large portrait of Lady Huntly was presented to the ballroom. As a sidelight upon the educational status of the neighbourhood it is noteworthy that out of twenty-two thousand inhabitants, only about three thousand could read English or Gaelic.

In 1820 the absence of the life and soul of the meeting, Lord Huntly, is recorded. There was a good attendance, the chairmen being Mr. Macleod of Cadboll, Sir James Dunbar, and Sir William Gordon Cumming. Game was presented by neighbouring families.

The new secretary appointed this year was Mr. Affleck Fraser, of Culduthel.

1821 saw an earlier gathering, on September 20th. "An unusually great concourse of a fashionable company." Mrs. Maclean of Cariacon sent a fine

turtle, as also Mr. William Falconer of Inverness. Game was sent by Lovat, Relig, and John Windsor, Esquire, the race course being arranged for games, etc.

We note a thin attendance for 1822, but other interesting events occurred. At Duneancroy (of which the translation is "the level stretch by the Hill of Birds") games are held after the meeting, under Glengarry. He presided in all his glory and had the field almost wholly to himself, "the other judges probably conceiving themselves ill qualified to decide in matters which lay altogether between the chief and the gentlemen of his tail." What, may say some Saxon Duinhé-wassal (English gentleman), is the exact meaning of "tail"?

The tail is a retinue of followers which usually accompanied a chieftain when he paid visits to those of equal rank with himself. There was the henchman or right-hand man, then the bard or poet, then the bladier or orator to make harangues, then the gillymore or armour-bearer to carry sword, target and gun, then the gilly casfluich to carry him on his back through sikes and brooks, then the gilly-comstrain to lead his horse in rough places, then the gilly-trush harnish to carry his knapsack, concluding with the piper and his man and a dozen "boys of the belt" for odd requirements of the Laird.

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A foot race of eight miles was run in fifty minutes, the winner reaching the tape minus any particle of clothing !

Another event was the throwing of a boulder of eighteen stone weight over a bar five feet off the ground. A mere stone-mason did this feat, all the other "pretty men" being foiled. A contingency of this competition was the rupture of blood-vessels or breaking of backs.

Most remarkable, however, was the tearing of three cows limb from limb, after they had been felled and stunned by a sledge-hammer. Even the most expert of the competitors took four or five hours in "rugging and riving," tooth and nail, before bringing off the limbs of one cow. Payment was made at the rate of five guineas a joint, so that (so runs the narrative) "We hope the rise in the value of black cattle will make the Glengarry men some small amends for the fall of ewes and wedders at Falkirk Tryst, lately noticed by their Chief."

This sarcasm shows that not much love was lost between the local press this year and Glengarry !

A writer of this period remarked that "Southron delicacy might have turned up its nose at the rather paradisaical costume of the runners in the foot race." Eight started, not absolutely in McNab's nightgowns, whatever might be whispered amongst the ladies, but

in shirts of rather ample dimensions, considering the comparatively recent adoption of this Saxon luxury in this country. They proved their high antiquity in various ways, and besides, bore ample tokens of having seen abundant service since last year's great bucking washing at Invergarry. Four of them came in "skelpin-naked." Limitations of space prevent me from quoting further criticisms of this festival, but a perusal of the *Inverness Courier* for 10th October will well repay the trouble of those further interested.

In 1823, owing to the death of a lady friend, the Marquis of Huntly was absent from the dinner of sixty.

An account of the races may not be without interest.

Wednesday, October 1st.

£50 given by the Meeting.

Weight for age. 1 mile heats.

1. Sir Alex. Ramsay's Meeta—4 years—I. 1.
Mr. W. M'Dowell Grant's b.g. Moureath, aged—2.
2. Match for 50 guineas each, h. ft. 6 st. 7 lb. 1 mile.
Mr. M'Dowell Grant's br. g. Governor, 6 years—I.
Mr. Fraser of Lovat's b.g. Cockney, aged—2.
3. Match for 50 guineas each. P.p. 9 stone. 1½ miles.
Lord Huntly's ch. m. by Idle Boy, 5 years—I.
Mr. Newton's br. g. Malcolm Graham, 4 years—2.

An easy win.

Thursday.

£50 given by Lord-Lieutenant for horses bred in the counties connected with the meeting.

2 mile heats. Weight for age.

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1. Mr. Shepperd's br. m. Shepherdess by Troilus, named by Mr. Fraser of Culduthel. W.O.
Mr. F. Mackenzie, junr., of Gairloch's blk. m. Gipsy, drawn.
2. Port Stakes of 15 guineas each. 5 forfeit for Ponies not exceeding 13 hands. 8 st. each.
Mile heats. 11 subscribers.
Mr. D. Mackintosh's W.S. br. p.—1.
Lord Huntly's Highland Lassie—2.
Lord Saltoun names Jenny from Toun—3.
Mr. Mackay's Bl. p. distanced—4.
Referred to the Newmarket Jockey Club.
3. Match for 50 guineas each p.p. 13 st.
1 mile and distance.
Mr. W. M'Dowell Grant's b.h. Llewellyn, aged—1.
Mr. F. Mackenzie junr., Gairloch's ch. g. Ruby by Petronius—2.
Gentlemen riders. Won by half a neck.
Match for 50 guineas each p.p. 1 mile.
Mr. F. Mackenzie's Gipsy—1.
Mr. Frazer's Shepherdess—2.

Friday.

Northern Meeting. Stakes of 30 guineas.

Weight for age. 10 forfeit. 2 miles. 13 subscribers.

Mr. Farquharson's Meeta. W.O.

Sir A. Ramsay's b.c. Marshal Blucher, drawn.

£50 given by the M.P. for the county.

Weight for age. 2 mile heats.

Sir A. Ramsay's b.c. Marshal Blucher—1.

Mr. M'Dowell Grant's b.g. Governor—2.

A well contested race.

A match of 50 guineas each.

2 ft. Half-mile heats.

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Mr. Grant's Llewellyn—1.

Mr. Mackenzie's b.g.—2.

Gentlemen riders.

A match of 50 guineas. 1 mile.

Mr. Davidson junr. of Tulloch's b.g.—1.

Mr. Grant of Radcastle b.g., rode (sec.) by Mr.
Mackenzie junr. of Gairloch—2.

A fine race won by a length.

The course was greatly improved, the concourse was great, and weather favourable. The site was three miles from the town, along the Caledonian Canal, and a good view was obtained from the sloping banks and high ground adjacent.

The owner of Shepherdess gave £50 towards further improvement of the course.

In 1824 there were races at Dunain, and scarcely ever before had such an illustrious company and splendid equipages been seen. The date was 29th September, and the ball was kept up until four a.m. A curious entry was that in one race horses of two years old had to carry "a feather" and three-year-olds 6 st. 10 lb. Three hundred attended the ball, and two hundred and fifty the supper, the chairmen being Mr. Mackenzie of Kilcoy, the Hon. James Sinclair and Lord Huntly. Quadrilles and strathspeys were danced. Lords Huntly and Macdonald each promised one hundred guineas towards the suggested new grand stand for the race-course.

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In 1825 both the Huntlys were absent, and Lord Saltoun presided, the other chairmen being Lord Macdonald and the Hon. James Sinclair.

Two gold cups were added to the prizes for racing, value one hundred guineas each. Most of the activity this year emanated from Ross-shire, headed by Mr. Davidson, jun., of Tulloch.

Amongst the entries we find :—

Mr. Rose of Glastullich's g.g. L.D.D.B.T.R.D. 6 years old.

but it did not win.

A charge of jostling having been made against the rider of the four-year-old black filly belonging to Mr. Fraser of Lovat in one race was found proved upon inquiry, and the race was given to Othello, who came in second.

There was a match for £50 between Mr. Fraser's b.f. (mentioned above), 8 st. 3 lb. (Wm. Boynton), and Mr. Davidson's b.f. (3 years), 7 st. 7 lb. (G. Gukie).

In 1826 no ladies attended the dinners, but no reason is given. One hundred and sixty danced until four a.m. Sir Wm. Gordon Cumming was chairman at dinner the first evening, Sir Ralph Anstruther the second, and Lord Macdonald the third. The course was kept clear by an unarmed detachment of the 78th Highlanders from Fort George. Quacks and mendicants, the latter lame and blind, were present.

Complaints were made about the charges for supper, but the secretary explained that no caterer would take the contract. Only fifty-seven dined one night. Twenty-five ladies and sixty-five gentlemen subscribed to a breakfast set of silver, which was given to the secretary, Mr. A. Fraser of Culduthel.

Nothing much occurred in 1827, the next year having only a poor attendance and bad weather. Lord Huntly was now Duke of Gordon. Thirty attended dinner, Mr. Davidson of Tulloch being chairman. The "croupier" was Mr. Munro of Novar.

In 1829 we are told the attendance was "more respectable than large." Seventy had supper under the chairmanship of Mr. C. C. Halket of Braelangwell the first day; the second one hundred sat down under Lord Saltoun. The Gordon family were absent. Many appeared in full Highland dress.

1830 was the dulllest year on record, and bad weather.

In 1831, owing to His Majesty's accession to the throne, the town volunteers were presented with an elegant set of colours by John Mackintosh and William Inglis Esquires, both D.L.'s. There were no races, members being away in Parliament, but the attendance at Thursday's ball was good.

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1832 was a blank year owing to the cholera. The subscription of two guineas was now altered to one.

Next year the falling off continued, and only the ball took place, many strangers being present.

1834 saw it pick up a bit, but more Southrons turn up every year. Three dinners and balls were held, one hundred and sixty coming on the Friday under Cluny Macpherson.

In 1835 the Duke of St. Albans and Lord Frederick Beauclerc appeared in Highland dress. There were a boat race, rifle practice and a pigeon shoot on the Friday. Captain Horatio Ross of Rossie, a noted rifleman, was defeated by Cluny Macpherson. A cold collation under an awning, with a band, was provided by Mrs. Baillie of Dochfour, an example commended to neighbours, as morning amusements have been noticeably absent since the horse races ceased.

Nothing is said of 1836, but in 1837 we read of an appeal being made by the secretary for support, and a good account is given of sports held. It would appear that their origin sprang from private and separate sources, but received patronage from the members of the Northern Meeting, who eventually amalgamated them with their own fixture. The date was 27th September, said to be more suitable, and it was the best meeting that had occurred for ten

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years. The secretary's appeal met with a good response, and the games were held in a field of Mr. Wilson's of the Caledonian Hotel near the "Longman." The derivation of this name is from the legend concerning the ghosts of men that were hanged on this space, long white spectres being said to haunt it. Whatever occurred there in the past, this year the shores of Moray Firth never looked gayer with the crowds that attended, and £100 was promised for the following year. Mr. Thos. Fraser was clerk of the meeting, and competitors were requested to "timeously enter" their names with him. The Duke of Richmond was absent, but the chairmen were Sir Francis Mackenzie and Lord Saltoun, the speakers including Lord Wm. Lennox. Events were as follows:—

Throwing the Hammer. 16 lb.

John Cameron, Findon, Ferrintosh, 72 feet 8 inches—1st, £2.

Hugh Fraser, Blacksmith, Inverness, 2 feet 8 inches less—2nd, 10s.

12 lb.

Robert Cameron, Inverness, 86 feet 6 inches—1st, £1.

H. Fraser, 85 feet—2nd, 5s.

Putting the Stone. 21 lb.

John Chisholm, Milburn, 30 feet 6 inches—1st, 10s.

John Cameron, within 4 inches—2nd, 10s.

Hop, Step and Leap.

John Hay, Inverness, 24 feet 8 inches—1st, £1.

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John Macpherson, plumber, Inverness, 23 feet 4 inches—
2nd, 5s.

High Leap.

John Cookson, 4 feet—£1.

John McRae, piper—5s.

250 yards.

John Campbell—£1.

100 yards Sack Race.

George Bain, Inverness—£1.

Wheelbarrow Race.

George Bain, Inverness—£1.

Wrestling.

John Chisholm, Milburn—£3 and collection of 35s. as
well.

Rifle Shooting.

Sir Francis Mackenzie of Gairloch, Bart.—1st.

Lord Lovat and Mr. Mackenzie, junr.—2nd and 3rd.

No belts or rests were allowed—distance 100 yards, and
3 shots each at a target of 36 inches in size.

1838 was a very successful year. The Duke of Gordon being dead, the Duke of Richmond was present, and the sports were similar to 1837. Judges: Lord Saltoun, Tulloch, Cluny, Arndilly and Culduthel. The new Duke was quieter than the old one, not a politician, but one likely to strengthen the tie between Gordon Castle and the Highland capital—a quiet but convincing speaker.

In 1839 races were started for the people. The starter was Mr. Peter of Yorkshire, who had won the

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St. Leger three times. Hurdle races and steeple-chases were added.

September 29th being the anniversary of the Battle of Busaco, it was noteworthy that Lord Saltoun and the Duke of Richmond had served under Wellington and at Waterloo.

Gifts contributed were :—

Duke of Sutherland, 2 fine stags.

Lord Lovat, 2 fine hinds.

Culduthel, partridges.

Mr. Boulderson, Brahan Castle, choice fruit.

A turtle of 130 lb. from the host of the Caledonian Hotel.

In 1840 Lord Lovat sent a fine stag and forty hares and rabbits; grouse, fruit and fallow deer were also sent. One hundred and fifty dined and three hundred danced, and there were races on two days. Two concerts in the town hall were added, at which the Inverness Militia Band attended. Concerto solos were given by Mr. Mackenzie and his brother, of Edinburgh.

1841 was a memorable year from the introduction of a Highland piping and dancing in full costume. Travelling expenses for one day's journey were allowed to competitors. Extra prizes were given for

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the two best dressed Highlanders, regardless of the person who paid for the dress. One Celtic competitor said he could not dance without a woman! The pipers had to lodge a list of twelve tunes with Mr. Hugh Bain for selection by the Committee. At one of the balls all the ladies appeared in fancy dress, such as Spanish, Swiss and old English.

Piping.

- 1st. Wm. Smith, Gordon Castle, piper to the Duke. (" Macdonald's Salute ")—a set of bagpipes value 10 guineas.
- 2nd. Angus McInnes, piper to Lord Douro. (" Battle of Sheriff Muir ")—5 guineas.
- 3rd. Donald Cameron, piper to J. R. Mackenzie of Scatwell. (" Viscount Dundee's Lament ")—2 guineas.

Eleven other competitors, including an old man eighty-six years of age called Macbeth, who was blind and led on to the field.

Dancing.

- 1st. James Grant, Battangorm, Strathspey for Highland Fling—3 guineas.
- 2nd. John Macallister, Tulloch, for Reels—2 guineas.
- 3rd. Kenneth MacIennan, Novar, " Ghille Cheallain " (Callum)—2 guineas.

There was a disturbance amongst the crowd owing to their breaking the ropes. Inspector Macbean and constables, assisted by Lord Ward and Cluny,

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quelled the disorder, four ringleaders being taken into custody.

1842 was a normal year, 1843 being in bad weather, but with a fair muster. Those present included Prince Alexander of the Netherlands, the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough and Richmond, Lord Douro, etc. Eighty-nine dined, under the Duke of Richmond, with Mackintosh, junior, of Mackintosh, "croupier."

1846 next attracts our attention from its large number of those present. The day was a month sooner, during the residence of noblemen and sportsmen in the district. No bands attended, nor were there any seats for the ladies. One of the competitors threw the hammer amongst the crowd, inadvertently. A fatal accident was only avoided by the stooping of those inside that part of the palisade. Cluny Macpherson and Mr. Hall Maxwell were both in imminent danger from this "foul throw." Sam Kennedy of Tulloch Castle threw the 12 lb. hammer 105 feet 10 inches with one hand, and was awarded four guineas. We now have mention of caber-tossing, but although the wood was often sawn and so shortened, the trial was eventually abandoned.

Printed programmes of the dances, etc., were now suggested, and Gaelic singing was a novelty. Singers

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appeared in sober suits, like church precentors, and the long and serious strains caused impatience amongst the audience. One, however, created amusement by his ludicrous gestures !

- 1st. Donald Macdonald, Invermoriston—5 guineas.
- 2nd. John Rose, Bank Lane, Inverness—3 guineas.

Lists were submitted to judges for selection.

The prizes for the pibrochs were a set of bagpipes, a silver brooch, silver-mounted snuff-mull, a dirk, a sporran, and a belt and buckle.

A race after a pig with a greasy tail then occurred, in which, after a rough and tumble, most of the tail was pulled off, spectators consequently ceasing to approve of the event. A seaman named James Fraser of Inverness eventually captured the pig. It is said there were no fights this year, nor were any pockets picked. Perhaps the silence as to other years is ominous !

The year 1847 was memorable from the visit of Prince Albert. He arrived from Gairloch by the canal route, and was the guest of Mr. Baillie of Dochfour. A procession of Councillors, Trades Representatives, and Freemasons was formed, and Provost Wm. Simpson presented an address from the Corporation in the town hall. The Earl of Seafield, Lord-Lieutenant, later on presented an address from

FIFTY YEARS: 1807-1857

the County. Two hundred Mackintosh clansmen assembled, and, with pipers and ensigns, formed a guard through which the Royal carriage passed. The Waterloo soldiers wore their medals at the head of each of the three Divisions. Prince Albert stayed for two hours at the dance later on, attired in a blue coat, white vest and black pantaloons, with the Ribbon of the Thistle and the Collar of the Garter. He seemed pleased with the reel dancing, and expressed his admiration of the music, the arrangements and general aspect of the ball. He left Dochfour on the Friday, and returned to the Queen at Lochiel. Queen Victoria, in the course of a letter to the King of the Belgians from Ardverikie during September, said: "Really, when one thinks of the *very dull life*, and particularly the life of constant self-denial which my poor, dear Albert leads, he deserves every amusement in the world, and even about his amusements he is so accommodating that I am deeply touched by it." Let us hope he found the Northern Meeting to his liking on this occasion.

1848 was nearly as good as 1847, the excitement lasting a week, steamers running to Glasgow, Leith and London, coaches to Dingwall, Caithness, Perth, Fort William, Aberdeen, and Elgin. The s.s. *Edinboro' Castle* was in command of Captain Turner, "vessel and captain great favourites."

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Cholera interferes in 1849; 1850 had only two days; a good and brilliant attendance included Lord and Lady Gough.

Clan dress was worn in 1851. Mr. Ronaleyn Cumming is said to have worn a singular costume, but no description of it is forthcoming. A small boy, called Peter Stewart, of Inverness was the recipient of much applause from spectators.

1852 was the most successful for some years; but 1853 appears to have lost its original character, more English people than Highlanders being present. Hardly twenty of the latter description, as proprietors, attended.

In 1855 there was an improvement in the attendance, and in 1856 several foreigners present were struck with the novelty of the scene, in spite of cold and ceaseless rain.

CHAPTER VII

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IN 1857 the 16 lb. hammer was thrown 103 feet 3 inches by Wm. MacHardy, Aberdeen, a good throw.

It is of interest to record that more than once has the hammer been thrown out of line, as on this occasion.

Other times were when the cap feathers of a distinguished Highland Chieftain were "dashed" while he was officiating as a judge.

Another hammer fell at Aberdeen, at the feet of a landed proprietor recumbent on the grass. Yet a third time, in close proximity to the Countess of Seafield near the roof-tree of a marquee at Strathspey. On this occasion the tent ropes just prevented the handle from inflicting injury. Somewhat naturally it was suggested that the preliminary swing should be abolished, as was done at Blair Atholl and elsewhere. It certainly does seem fortunate more accidents have not occurred in this event. Perhaps they have, but have not been noticed by historians.

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

1859. The Invergordon poisoning case caused a diminution in the number of spectators.

Members were admitted by ballot.

Entry fee £5, subscription £2, or £25 for life membership.

Honorary members £2, permanent £2.

Supper tickets 8s. (ladies 2s.).

In this year the Highland Society of London gave a Championship Gold Medal (value £5) for pipers.

Donald Cameron (Seaforth High) won it with "Mackintosh's Lament."

1860. More dancers than ever. The room was so crowded that parties had to dance in the lobby and landing-places on the staircase.

The great Donald Dinnie won the two hammer events, tossing the caber, putting the stone, 150 yards race and the hurdle race. The caber was 20 feet long.

A small person of peculiar figure, in tartan dress, was piper to Donald Stewart of Achindaul. He made his entry too late, but piped so well that he was given a special money prize, and engaged to pipe at the ball.

In 1862 we note that the costume of the two winners in the dress competitions were made from the wool of black-faced sheep bred in the Cairngorm Mountains. Lord Lovat was elected a permanent steward.

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The Duke of Richmond is a patron next year, and the venue was Bell's Park, beyond Academy Park. The caterers were Mr. Peacock, with the Royal and Caledonian Hotels. The enclosure was small and mean compared to the Academy one; it was boarded in and would have presented the appearance of a travelling theatre or circus had not three policemen been there. The company, however, was brilliant.

In 1864 was achieved the New Park near Ness House on the river's bank, to the extent of four acres.

The numbers at the balls in 1865 were five hundred and fifty and six hundred and thirty, and there was a great run on the "Moselle Cup."

The piper to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales won the second prize in the pibrochs in 1866.

In 1867 a special prize for pibroch was awarded to Keith Cameron of Maryburgh, aged eleven.

A grand fancy bazaar in 1868 caused an increase of spectators, and prizes were won by pipers to the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh. Mr. White retiring from the post of convener amidst general expression of gratitude, Mr. Fountaine Walker of Foyers was elected in his place.

In 1869 Donald Dinnie's son Cuthbert, aged nine, was commended for his dancing. In this event one competitor wore a shield and sword.

Old Dinnie was away in America in 1870. Pipe-

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Major Macdougall won the bagpipes he had himself supplied! We have this year mention of W. McCombie Smith of Aberdeen University. He won the long jump, and in later years was the well-known author of the book on Scottish Athletes. At the ball held later, the Rajah of Kolapore was present, and was the partner in the Lancers of Mrs. Merry of Belladrum.

Bad weather prevailed in 1871. Prizes were won by pipers to Lord Breadalbane and The Mackintosh (James Robertson and Donald Macdonald). Mr. T. G. Henderson (interim secretary) was appointed secretary. An interesting event was a race twice round the enclosure between four gentlemen.

Winner, Mr. Douglas Moffat.

Second, Captain Bolland, 3 yards start.

Third, Mr. Wingfield Strafford, 15 yards start.

The other gave up the first time round, and passes to posterity nameless.

The band of the 91st Highlanders was present in 1872.

David Airtley of Lochletter, winner of the dress competition, had attended for fifty years. The purveyors were Hunter and Glover of Edinburgh.

In 1873 single stick exercise was introduced by the 78th Highlanders, and the secretary's salary increased by £20 a year.

The band of the 99th Regiment played in 1874, and one of the Society's rooms let free of charge to the Inverness School of Art.

The 1st Royal Scots sent their band in 1875. Lance-Corporal MacGregor caused some amusement in the pole jump. He pretended to be a poor leaper, but when the height of 9 feet 1 inch was reached, he told the stewards to put the bar up another foot, and then cleared it gracefully. Lord Lovat died this year, also Mr. White, for many years the convener.

In 1876 a 600 yards handicap was added. Property occupied by Mr. Chisholm, ironmonger, was purchased this year for £2,000, so that the buildings by enlargement would enable the ball and supper rooms to be on the same floor.

Tugs-of-war come on in 1877, and music by the band of the 79th Cameron Highlanders. A dispute arose because a man of the Inverness team passed his hands over the blue ribbon marking the space between the two teams. Their opponents from Nairn appealed, and a new heave resulted in another win by Inverness. Nairn won the next heave, so the judges ordered another pull. But Inverness objected, and left the ground, Nairn receiving the prizes.

The floor of the ball-room in Church Street was refloored with pitch-pine. This was much appreciated

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

the next year. The tug-of-war was won by the Inverness Rifle Volunteers (no complaints!).

Lord Lovat in 1879 gave notice of a new proposal, i.e., that the names of the new honorary members be submitted to a quorum of not less than ten; if the black balls in the ballot box exceeded one-third the candidate was not elected.

A great feature in 1880 was the addition of a mile handicap foot race. Lord Lovat's proposal was carried.

In 1881 we are told that the death of a venerable gentleman of striking appearance caused his absence to be felt.

An obstacle race took place, the first portion being a run of twenty yards *backwards*.

Ventilation of the rooms was advocated, and carried out to general satisfaction.

1884 saw a larger attendance, and the suggestion of a new set of rules, which were adopted the following year.

The famous athletes Bremner, Fraser and Cameron attended in 1886. The Duchess of Sutherland was present. Supper was served at horse-shoe tables, and it was resolved to give a handsome prize at the International Exhibition at Edinburgh.

In 1887 Lord Lovat died, and a motion of condolence with his widow was passed.

1888 was a notable year from the attendance of several wrestlers in the Cumberland and Westmorland style. Their prowess was watched with considerable enthusiasm, the final order being :—

- 1st. Hexham Clarke (14 st. champion).
- 2nd. Tom Kennedy (13 st. champion).
- 3rd. J. Robinson (12 st. champion).
- 4th. J. Kerr.
- 5th. H. Nelson.

On the resignation of Mr. Fountaine Walker as convener, Colonel Mackenzie was elected in his place. A slope was added to the lawn.

Several novelties were introduced in 1889, among them being tent-pegging, tilting at the ring, and an exhibition of wrestling by picked men from Cumberland. There was also made a “crush-room” (not mushroom) 35 feet square by 15 feet high, the walls being lined with Japanese paper; a dado of gold and red lincrusta-walton with a rail of polished mahogany completed the decoration. The supper was served to members seated instead of standing.

The loss by death is recorded of Mr. Davidson of Cantray, convener of the county.

In 1890 nearly ten thousand attended, and the assembly was the most brilliant ever held in Scotland. The Highlanders Artillery Volunteers’ band was present; Hussars from Scotland gave an exhibition,

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and special acknowledgment was made of the services of Mr. T. G. Henderson, the secretary.

1891 saw a display by a detachment of the 6th Dragoon Guards.

1892 was remarkable from the fact that Donald McDonald of Arnamurchan was victor in the tossing of the caber, the trunk having six inches more wood on the thick end than any other competitor could tackle.

Succeeding Colonel Mackenzie of Flowerburn (1892), Sir Hector Munro, Bart., of Foulis Castle became convener in 1893. His portrait is facing page 169. It was a very wet year, but a girls' skipping race of 160 yards was included. Those who, like the writer, have the pleasure of Sir Hector's acquaintance, as well as that of his connections, the Stirlings and Ainsworths of Cumberland, will readily endorse this appreciation of his popularity and fitness for the honour he thus received and held until 1908.

Lord Roberts, V.C., presented the medals in 1894 to the winning Volunteer team in the bayonet competition. He also addressed the men on the comparative utilities of the lance and the bayonet in hand-to-hand warfare. The band of the Black Watch attended, and amongst other distinguished Indians present were the Gaekwar of Baroda and his wife.

Nothing special occurred the next two years, but

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in 1897 the Duke and Duchess of York attended for a long time, making themselves extremely sociable and popular.

In 1898 a captivating military display was given by sixteen troopers of the Royal Scots Greys, under Lieutenant Parker; they went through the plaiting of the Maypole, the musical ride, and the Balaclava Mêlée; other items were cleaving the Turk's head, over jumps, tent-pegging, and lemon-cutting. The question of increasing the gathering's premises was discussed next year, and an exhibition of gymnastics was given by the 2nd Seaforths.

1900 being overclouded by the South African War, no dances took place, but one day's sports were held. Local Volunteers gave an exhibition of bayonet exercise, and surplus funds were applied to war purposes.

Next year was very cold, and made it hard for the pipers to execute the wonderful grace-notes, usually so much admired. There was a two-mile bicycle handicap; in the final four out of the six racing having been brought down by a collision, the other two received the prizes. The Mackintosh presided at the meeting later on, at which it was decided to redecorate the room.

In 1902 the Yeomanry gave a musical ride, competing also in "heads and posts," lemon-cutting and

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tent-pegging. Her Highness Princess Sophie Dhuleep Singh of Farr graced the ball with her presence.

1903 was normal, but the next year the competition for the gold clasp to the previous winners of the medal for pibroch playing was thrown open, and the Inverness Town Band provided the music.

In 1905 three Japanese wrestlers from London appeared named Myake, Eida, and Kanaya, and threw the local wrestlers easily. Only one young soldier scored a point by bringing one jiu-jitsu man down.

The Duchess of Wellington attended the ball in 1906, and the sports included a 300 yards race for soldiers in marching order with rifles. Seven out of seventeen entrants competed.

Six thousand came in 1907, and witnessed, among other things, a display of horsemanship given by a detachment of the 18th Hussars from York, under Lieutenant Lawrence, V.C.

In 1908 a "shinty" match between Lochaber and Newton Moor showed the clever handling of Caman. The Jap wrestlers turned up again. Sir John Macpherson Grant was elected convener in succession to Sir Hector Munro, to whom a presentation was made of a solid silver salver with the Munro arms upon it, also a silver bowl (being a copy of the Monteith bowl) with his crest upon it, on an ebony stand of

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Chippendale design. The inscription on each piece of plate was "To Sir Hector Munro, Bart., of Foulis, from the members of the Northern Meeting, in recognition of his Convenership 1892 to 1908."

In 1909 a musical race was given by the 2nd Seaforths and a score of naval ratings from the Home Fleet. Mr. Henderson and his brother had completed forty years' service at this year's meeting.

Sailors were present in 1910 from H.M.S. *King Edward VII* and H.M.S. *Bellerophon*. A physical drill by boys and a musical maze were added.

Fashionable ladies will learn this year of larger muffs, electric seal as the favourite fur, half-length jackets being worn, the skirts having a broad pleat at the back and a narrow one in front. The "chiel amang them takkin' notes" said this gave them greater grace than heretofore with a "tied-in" appearance. Hats were trimmed with wide wings, flowers and ostrich plumes. The vogue of the previous few months was altered, and women now walked as nature intended.

1911 saw the strathspey and reel won by a Canadian. W. Knox of Canada also won the pole leap with 11 feet 6 inches, and there was a barrel race for dock labourers. Very few ladies wore the hobble skirt. Mrs. David Logan received a handsome

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cheque for her services as musical director of the balls.

Knox won the pole leap again in 1912 with 11 feet 8 inches and received a gold medal and £3. The band of the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders attended.

1913 saw five hundred Boy Scouts present, and a four-mile bicycle handicap was won by Hans Holmer, the American, from scratch.

After the great international upheaval, 1919 was of note from the joint election of Brigadier-General Ross of Cromarty and Colonel Baillie of Dochfour as conveners. Mr. Henderson, after fifty-one years' service, was granted a substantial pension, and Major David Ross (portrait facing page 163) was elected secretary in his place.

Amongst the ten thousand spectators present in 1920 were Their Royal Highnesses the Earl of Inverness and Prince Albert. £10 was added as prize money to the gold medal for pibroch playing. The kilted boys from Queen Victoria School at Dunblane were competitors in dancing and piping. A football match of five-a-side was played, and the country dance called "Strip the Willow" was an innovation.

Colonel Rose was convener in 1923, and the next year saw the debut of James Maitland, the hefty



Daily Record Photo.

GROUP OF OFFICIALS AT INVERNESS, 1926

Sir Jas. Grant of Househill

The Earl of Leven and Melville

The Earl of Cawdor

Major David Ross, *Secretary*

Capt. Gordon Duff

Major Munro of Allan

young farmer from Banffshire, in the heavy competitions. He was thirty years of age, 6 feet 4 inches in height, and 15 stone in weight. His distance for throwing the hammer was 94 feet 6 inches.

The Yahoo Jazz Sextet attended the dance, which terminated at five a.m. with the stirring gallop of "John Peel."

1926. A glance at the programme gives a very comprehensive idea of the festival as it took place this year. Everything went like clock-work, thanks to the indispensable energies of the secretary, Major David Ross, and his assistant, Mr. Wotherspoon, besides many others.

A word should, perhaps, be said about the display given by the youthful pipe army from Dunblane, in command of Pipe-Major W. M. Taylor. Their dancing and piping were exemplary exhibitions of the exercise of lungs and limbs.

The social side of the meeting is one that has rightly an enormous attraction for the Highland aristocracy, and it may safely be said that hardly any family of ancient lineage was without its representative, on one or both of the days, and it would be an invidious task to compare the stalwart clansmen in full costume with their smartly dressed relatives and friends of the gentler sex.

The true Highland spirit of healthy sociability

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was no less *en evidence* at Ardross Street Park in the daytime than it was at the Church Street ball-room in the evenings, where the creations of world-famous *couturières* in London and Paris vied with each other in tasteful contrast to the bemedalled uniforms of the Silent and its sister services. Amongst the ships to send officers were H.M.S. *Revenge*, *Royal Sovereign*, *Hood*, *Iron Duke*, *Emperor of India*, *Curacoa*, *Walker*, *Furious*, *Walpole*, *Cyclops*, and *Campbell*, and gay in the extreme was the spectacle presented in the eightsome reels both nights.

The cold weather had a rather depressing effect on the spectators, but the interest in the events was so well sustained that no diminution was noticed in the attendance on the stands, though it was acknowledged that it was warmer in the sunshine, not under cover. The pipers felt the cold in their fingers when attempting the grace notes, and it also affected their drones. The well-known passage in "Macbeth" regarding the Inverness climate, was for once misleading, but it made the warmth of the subsequent social amenities much more appreciated in consequence.

Here follows the list of prize-winners :—

THURSDAY'S PRIZE-LIST

Pibrochs on Great Highland Bagpipes and Highland Society of London's gold medal and £8—1, John Macdonald,



Photo. Topical

ANDERSON THROWING THE WEIGHT AT ABOYNE



Photo. Bissett

SOME BEEF AT ABOYNE

Ian Grant, Michie, Graham, Maitland, Starkey, Ferguson, Nicholson

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Glasgow Police; 2, £5, Ronald M. Meldrum, Clarkston, Glasgow; 3, £3, Hugh Kennedy, Mount Florida, Glasgow; 4, £1 10s., David Ross, Rosehall, Sutherland.

Marches—1, £4, John Macdonald, Glasgow Police; 2, £3, Hugh Kennedy, Mount Florida, Glasgow; 3, £2, John Wilson, Edinburgh; 4, Robert Bell Nicol, Balmoral.

Marches—Boys under 17—1, £2, Francis J. Bigger Hope, Belfast; 2 and 3, Pipe-Major R. Shelton, Dunblane School, and Sergt. W. Mackinlay, Dunblane School; 4, Angus M. Chisholm, Inverness.

220 yards Foot Race (handicap)—1, £2, T. Yeudall, 4th Cameron Highlanders; 2, Sergt. Colin Cameron, Elgin; 3, James Edwards, Falkirk.

Throwing the Light Hammer—1, £3, Jas. Maitland, Cullen, 113 feet 5 inches; 2, Sergt.-Major Starkey, Redford Bks., 112 feet; 3, Geo. Clark, Huntly.

High Jump—1, £3, Wm. Fraser jun., Conon Bridge, 5 feet 8 inches; 2, Jas. Edwards, Falkirk; 3, Geo. Grant, Nairn.

Half-mile Foot Race—1, A. E. Noble, Inverness; 2, Pte. Sharpe, Cameron Depot; 3, Lance-Corpl. Dane, 2nd Black Watch.

Dancing Highland Fling—1, Sergt. J. Learmouth, Dunblane School; 2, Corpl. B. Anderson, Dunblane School; 3, Sergt. W. Mackinlay, Dunblane School.

One Mile Cycle Race (handicap)—1, Alex. Fraser, Drumnadrochit; 2, Finlay Anderson, Inverness; 3, Ian Macleod, Inverness.

440 yards Race (handicap)—1, T. Yeudall; 2, Evan Mackenzie, Inverness, and Ben. Smith, Wishaw.

Tossing the Caber—1, Sergt.-Major Starkey and William Fraser, Inverness, equal; 3, Jas. Maitland, Cullen.

One Mile Foot Race (handicap)—1, Ben Smith, Wishaw; 2, John F. Cameron, Inverness; 3, Richardson, H.M.S. *Wessex*.

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Hurdle Race—1, Jas. Edwards, Falkirk; 2, Sergt. Colin Cameron, Elgin; 3, Evan Mackenzie.

Putting Light Stone—1, Sergt.-Major Starkey, 40 feet 3½ inches; 2, Edward Anderson, Dundee; 3, Jas. Maitland, Cullen.

Two Mile Cycle Race—1, Jas. M. Urquhart, Brodie; 2, Fraser, Inverness; 3, Finlay Anderson, Inverness.

Vaulting with the Pole—1, D. Tulloch, C. Durno, Kintail, and Arthur J. Sinclair, Lhanbryde, 10 feet 9 inches; 2, J. W. Beaton, Croy, and A. Lawson, Aberdeen.

Quarter-mile Foot Race—1, Mackenzie, Inverness; 2, Warden Macintyre, Inverness; 3, Hobson, Fort-George, and Able Seaman Church, H.M.S. *Valhalla*.

Dancing Highland Fling—1, Jack Gordon Beattie, Aberdeen; 2, Pipe-Major Taylor, Dunblane; 3, Sidney Black, Edinburgh.

220 yards (handicap)—1, B. N. Topper, Inverness; 2, D. Taylor, H.M.S. *Walker*; Warden Macintyre.

Six-a-side shinty match, Final—Lovat 3 goals, Stratherrick, 1.

FRIDAY'S PRIZE-LIST

Piobaireachds, £10 and gold medal—1, Pipe-Major Robert Reid, 7th H.L.I.; 2, £8, Pipe-Major Ross, Edinburgh; 3, £6, Piper John Macpherson, Newtonmore; 4, £3, Pipe-Major R. Meldrum, Inverness.

Strathspeys and Reels—1, £4, John Macdonald, Glasgow Police; 2, £3, Hugh Kennedy, Mount Florida, Glasgow; 3, £2, Reid.

March, Strathspey, and Reel—1, Silver star and £6, Geo. S. MacLennan, Aberdeen; 2, £4, David Ross, Rosehall, Sutherland; 3, £2, Pipe-Major R. Reid, 7th H.L.I.

880 yards Foot Race (handicap)—1, £3, Ben Smith, Wishaw; 2, £2, Jas. Edwards, Falkirk; 3, Evan Mackenzie, Inverness.

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Putting Heavy Stone—1, £4, Sergt.-Major Starkey, Redford Bks.; 2, £3, Jas. Maitland, Cullen; 3, £1, Edward Anderson, Dundee.

Gillie Callum—1, £4, J. Beatie, Aberdeen; 2, £3, Sidney Black, Edinburgh; 3, £2, A. R. Massie, Clydebank; 4, A. Cameron, Inverness.

One Mile Cycle Race—1, £2, Jas. Urquhart, Brodie; 2, £1 10s., W. S. Bruce, Inverness; 3, £1, John Cameron, Inverness.

Throwing Heavy Hammer—1, £4, Sergt.-Major R. K. Starkey, Redford Bks.; 2, £2, Jas. Maitland, Cullen; 3, £1, Geo. Clarke, Huntly.

Relay Team Race, confined to H.M.S. Forces—1, Depot Cameron Highlanders; 2, 2nd Black Watch; 3, H.M.S. *Royal Sovereign*.

High Jump—1, £3, William Fraser jun., Conon Bridge; 2, Jas. Edwards, Falkirk, and Sergt. Colin Cameron, Elgin, equal.

220 yards Race (handicap)—1, £2, Colin Cameron, Elgin; 2, T. Yeudall, 4th Cameron Highlanders, and Jas. Edwards, Falkirk, equal.

220 yards Foot Race, amateurs only (handicap)—1, P.O. Writer Taylor, H.M.S. *Revenge*; 2, Warden Macintyre, Inverness; 3, Harry N. Schorah, H.M.S. *Comus*.

Tug-of-War—H.M.S. *Revenge* beat Inverness Burgh Police.

440 yards Foot Race (handicap)—1, £3, Ben Smith, Wishaw; 2, £2, Evan Mackenzie, Inverness; 3, £1, T. Yeudall.

Dancing Strathspey and Reel—1, £4, Sidney Black, Edinburgh; 2, £3, A. R. Massie, Clydebank; 3, £2, J. Beatie, Aberdeen.

Three Mile Cycle Race (handicap)—1, £3, William M.

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

Mackenzie, Elgin; 2, £2, Finlayson; 3, £1, Jas. Ross Macdonald, Evanton.

Tossing the Caber—1, £4, Sergt.-Major R. K. Starkey, Redford Bks.; 2, £3, Edward Anderson, Dundee; 3, £2, Jas. Maitland, Cullen.

Quarter-mile Foot Race, amateurs only—1, Corpl. Rice, Depot Seaforth Highlanders; 2, Able Seaman Church, H.M.S. *Valhalla*; 3, Noble and Smith tied.

Vaulting with Pole—1, £3, Chas. Durno, Kintail; 2, J. W. Beaton, Croy, and Arthur J. Sinclair, Lhanbryde (equal).

Two Mile Cycle Race—1, Urquhart, 2, Macleod, 3, Cameron.

EXTRA EVENTS

Heavy Weight—1, Maitland, 29 feet 5½ inches; 2, Starkey, 29 feet 1 inch.

Pipers, Dunblane School—Miller.

Drummers, Dunblane School—Kennedy.

Five Lap Race—1, Smith; 2, Cameron; 3, Mackenzie.

Five-a-side Football Competition, 1st round—Caley beat Citadel. Clach beat Thistle. Final—Caley and Clach draw after extra time.

The annual meeting of members was held under the convenership of Colonel Hugh Rose of Kilravock, C.M.G., and largely attended. The retiring stewards were General Lord Horne of Stirkoke, and Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch, and their places were filled by Archibald C. Macpherson of Cluny, and Sir Ronald Baillie of Jedburgh, O.B.E.

Four new members were elected, viz., Captain Warre of Gledfield, Mr. Eion Merry, jun., of Belladrum, Sir Theodore Brinckman of Nairnside, and Major the Hon. Alistair Fraser of Moniak.



Photo, Whyte

LORD LOVAT



Photo Spot and General

AT INVERNESS, 1926

Sir Hector Munro, Bt., A.D.C., a friend, Mrs. Munro of Allan

The numbers at the two balls are given as about seven hundred and seventy and seven hundred respectively, Mrs. D. Logan's band providing the music. It was six o'clock on the Saturday morning before dancing terminated.

It seems fitting to conclude this short notice of the Gathering with a reference to the amusement caused by the diverting stunt given by the Seaforth and Cameron Highlanders towards the end of the proceedings each day. Entering the arena with poles and well protected about the head and body, they engaged in serious combat of a lively nature, but finally discarding the weapons, took to fisticuffs and pantomimic boxing features that convulsed the crowd and brought laughter to the voices and smiles to the faces of the happy onlookers, as they wended homewards to discuss the contests of the various athletes in those other places of gathering and sodality.

“ They tell o' lands with brighter skies
 Where freedom's voice ne'er rings;
 Gi'e me the hills where Ossian dwelt,
 And Coila's minstrel sang!
 For I've nae skill o' lands, my lads,
 That ken na to be free;
 Then Scotland's right, and Scotland's might,
 And Scotland's hills for me!
 We'll drink a cup to Scotland yet
 Wi' a' the honours three! ”

CHAPTER VIII

DONALD DINNIE



Photo. Milne

CHAPTER VIII

DONALD DINNIE

THE marvellous collection of medals depicted opposite this page are surely unique in the history of Scottish athletes. The actual prizes won by Donald numbered over ten thousand, so we are glad to give a few words about his victorious career. Born on the 8th July, 1837, at Aboyne, Aberdeenshire, he soon exhibited great physical strength. His father being a mason and contractor, Donald became apprenticed to this work, until after qualification, he carried on similar business by himself. His father came from Birse in the same county, and was eighty-three when he died in 1891. Donald was the eldest of six sons, and had four sisters. All the sons followed their father's occupation, except one, called Walter, who after being a bank clerk, became a clerk, and later a detective at Scotland Yard, rising eventually to the rank of inspector.

In 1869 Donald had an hotel for three years at Kincardine O'Niel, before keeping the Royal Ury

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Hotel at Stonehaven. Here he made money with a posting business and funeral undertaking, and subsequently bought the Kintore Arms Hotel at Auchinblae, setting up a larger establishment than was justified by the resulting business. Either the neighbours did not die in sufficient numbers, or preferred to dispense with hearse and horses when their time came. Anyhow, he was not successful, and went farther afield. He is reported to have negotiated for the purchase of a nice hotel in Dundee, and only to have given up the idea when he found it was impossible to swing a hammer in the back yard. Donald denied this story himself, saying his reason for not taking it was its only having a public-house and not a full hotel licence. In 1870 he was invited by the Caledonian Clubs in America to go over to the States, and he defeated the best athletes there and in Canada. In 1872 he paid the States another visit, this time with James Fleming of Ballingling. He remained in Scotland ten years after that, until his next visit abroad, which included Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Natal, and Cape Colony. He went into the hotel and posting business in the Colonies, and also had several prize-winning trotters. His last house was a restaurant at Auckland. His return to Scotland was the cause of great personal disappointment. The result of his appearance in

many of the scenes of his former triumph was such as barely covered his expenses. For twelve months he kept dining-rooms in Crookston Street, and later on in Old Govan Road, Glasgow, within pistol shot of where, twenty-five years previously, he had won more money in one day than he then took for a whole week. Fish and chips next—but let us turn from this (although in pantomime and elsewhere the reference frequently causes a smile), to the brighter side of his history.

With a height 6 feet, chest 48 inches, and thigh of $26\frac{1}{2}$ inches, he had a calf of $17\frac{1}{4}$ inches. In proper training his weight was 15 stone. His swarthy complexion and piercing eyes were characteristic of his nature, and all his life he stuck to the kilt.

It was perhaps the irony of Fortune, if such a thing exists, that Dinnie's universal popularity and prowess as an athlete should be overshadowed by sceptical jealousy and allegations of mendacity regarding his records. In his absence abroad, the later generation could not, or did not, wish to believe that he had done things so supremely superior to his contemporaries. He could toss a huge caber, at which they failed completely, unless a piece was sawn off it. They did not like that, it made them "pygmies under a giant," as it was described by the *Aberdeen*

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Herald in 1878, when reporting the games at Speyside.

Luckily, "coming down to brass tacks," so to speak, we have the Aboyne Records from 1867 to 1890. Hammers, stones, and ground, all remains unchanged. Eight years he competed there, so let us see his doings, and we have genuine facts and figures. With the 24 lb. hammer he won seven firsts and one second, throwing it 81 feet 6 inches, with the old handles. Since 1890, J. H. Johnston, with new handles, threw 84 feet 3 inches. With light hammer of 16 lb. he won every time at Aboyne, throwing 107 feet 10 inches. Soon after, J. H. Johnston threw 113 feet 2 inches. Next with heavy stone of 22 lb. at Aboyne, Donald had six firsts, one second, and one third, his maximum distance being 37 feet. With light stone of 16 lb. Donald had seven firsts and one second, with 46 feet 9½ inches maximum.

It was, however, in tossing the caber that Donald shone chiefly. He won it eight times, while M'Rae and Davidson only scored four and three times respectively.

At Braemar Dinnie's winning putt, with the 28 lb. stone, was 31 feet 7 inches in 1867; his other performances were 92 feet 4 inches with the 16 lb. hammer, 84 feet 9 inches with the 22 lb., high leap

DONALD DINNIE

5 feet 4½ inches, and long leap 17 feet 11 inches. It is recorded by Mr. A. G. Cumming that he threw the 16 lb. hammer 94 feet 4 inches at Braemar in 1865, in which year Wm. Cattenach beat Dinnie by 2 inches with the 28 lb. stone.

In 1871 he threw the 16 lb. hammer 138 feet 8 inches at Coupar-Angus.

I cannot refrain from quoting the late Mr. Charles Donaldson's anecdote of Mar Lodge, on the occasion when His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales (later His Majesty King Edward) was present. The games were almost over when the Royalties arrived, but the Committee simply had to prolong them. They besought Donald to go out and show his prowess with hammer and caber. "Ay," said Donald, "I'll gang oot, but I want twa pound." "But it's for the Prince of Wales, Donald," they said. "Ye ken it's an honour tae throw before the Prince." "I dinna gie a d——," said Donald. "I pay me taxes, and I'll tak no less." Eventually the other competitors took the field without him, and like the Sergeant-Major, "carried on," until the caber event was reached. On seeing the failure of all the others, Donald rushed into the arena, and gave a tremendous toss. He denied he wanted the £2 otherwise than as a prize open to all the competitors, but the story stands for what it is worth.

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Napoli, the Italian Hercules, once visited the show grounds at West End, Aberdeen, when Dinnie chanced to appear. With practice, he soon lifted a bar bell of 250 lb. with both hands, above his head, and also 168 lb. in his right hand. Not many Scotsmen try this.

Turning to wrestling, we note that in 1882 at Plainfield, New Jersey, he won the mixed styles championship of America, and a massive gold medal given by Mr. R. K. Fox of *The Police Gazette*.

On another occasion William Muldoon, the champion Græco-Roman wrestler of those days, agreed to have a match with Donald for £50 a side and half "gate." In this match Donald undertook to throw Muldoon twice for once, the former in the Cumberland and Westmorland style, and the latter in the Græco-Roman. Muldoon regularly applied the strangling hold, and thus won his portion, because Donald could not avoid it, nor did he know he could break fingers, thumbs, or wrists, and so lost.

Muldoon thus had five falls in his favour, and Donald began on his task of gaining ten in his own style.

It was unfortunate that the gong for "time" sounded just as Dinnie won the ninth fall, so he was defeated by one fall.

At San Francisco Dinnie lost to Farrel in the

DONALD DINNIE

wrestling and McMillan in the putting, but won the hammer-throwing, and in fact, all the heavy events. His winnings totalled £350, as well as half the "gate" in another match with Muldoon the same night.

In a wrestling match in Australia he met Professor Millar and made quite sure of his victory this time, his opponent sustaining a broken leg. This was the consequence of the referee giving a "draw" in his weight-lifting match with Billy Hudson in New Zealand.

At the height of his career, Donald proved a great attraction to thousands of folks in the country districts. One old woman once tramped from up Deeside to Braemar just to get a glimpse of him. After much jostling and pushing she eventually got within sight of him, and inquired which competitor he was.

"That's him with the tanned skin," said someone (regardless of grammar).

"Ay, ay," said she, "he's a braw chiel. Aweel, I'll awa' hame again; I'll dee happy noo, noo I've seen Donal' Dinnie."

This occurred years ago, but Donald kept up his proud and independent character long after he left the ring, preserving a pugnacity similar to that of an old chief, who, on being asked on his deathbed to forgive his enemies, replied he had none, because he had killed them all. Such indeed was Dinnie.

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Undiplomatic, unlucky, uncompromising, unbending, yet he was as true as steel, and honest and straightforward to a fault.

It is pleasant to be able to find his cheery son still in Scotland, as the writer can testify from personal experience. One sunny Sunday, Mr. Smith, whose guest I was at the comfortable White Hart Hotel at Arbroath for several days, most kindly motored me over to the Commercial Hotel at Brechin in Forfarshire, where we found Edwin G. Dinnie in the best of health and spirits. Though very busy, he entertained us in his sanctum, and to his kindness and courtesy is due the insertion of two of our illustrations, namely, those of some of his father's medals and the ancient group taken at the Aboyne Gathering on pages 183 and 173.

As tossing the caber was the chief event for which Dinnie was celebrated, it may be of interest to trace the origin of this feat. Some hold that it originated during the felling of timber, and that when burns or rivers had to be crossed, the workmen threw them across to the opposite bank. It could hardly be said that bridge-building gave it its origin. We must remember that a caber does not always fall in the required direction, so this theory does not find universal acceptance.

A facetious friend of mine (a prominent judge at

the Northern Gathering) ventures the idea that frequently these Highlanders had fractious wives to control at home, and practised throwing trees about to keep their muscles in good form for the enforcement of love, honour, or obedience that might be required in the domestic circle. Prayer Book revision was not then under ecclesiastical consideration, but wives probably never intended obedience then more than they do nowadays.

In a delightful volume published some years ago anonymously under the title of "Pages from a Private Diary," one of the entries relates to the author visiting Highland Games in the company of a learned professor, who waxed very eloquent over tossing the caber. He had no doubt that the sport, like the word, was originally Norman, and had come to Scotland with other essentials of civilization, such as "napery" and "carafes," in the days when French and Scotch were brothers in arms. The diarist doubted this. He quotes the description from the "Voces Populi" of Mr. Anstey, a gentleman whose pen was as accurate as it was facile. The caber—a rough fir-trunk 21 feet long—is tossed, that is, lifted by six men, set on end, and placed in the hands of the athlete, who, after looking at it doubtfully for a time, poises it, raises it a foot or two, and runs several yards with it, after which he jerks it forward by a mighty effort so

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as to pitch on the thicker end, and fall over in the direction farthest from him. We Southerners, he adds, very much resented the introduction of horn-pipes into the dancing competitions. But on reflection, he did not see why Highlanders should not be sailors as well as soldiers.

There are those, too, who think that the bagpipes were introduced from France, being the original "cornemuse."

When we realize that the clansmen were mainly addicted in bygone days to cattle-lifting and sheep-tending, we can understand them having plenty of time to spare for recreation. They would naturally turn to such sport or exercise for which the implements lay most conveniently to their hands. Thus they would hurl great stones and trees about, and so in course of time came into existence putting the weight and tossing the caber. It seems fairly certain that throwing the hammer originated from men meeting at a blacksmith's shop to have their horses shod. As they waited time would hang heavy, but some energetic youth would seize the blacksmith's hammer and throw it some way, for his companions to follow suite, and thus start a diversion, which has never since been discontinued. Long may it remain, as its spectacular interest is enormous.

Before I leave Donald and his exploits I must



Photo. Milne

OLD GROUP OF ATHLETES AT ABOYNE
The Marquis of Huntly and Dinnie are on the right

include an ancient anecdote regarding the "putting of the stone."

On the eve of Culloden the combatants indulged in various athletic pastimes, and one particular Lowlander challenged all the others at this feat of strength. It was not long before the Highland officers discovered the intention of their men, and got the wind up properly, especially as the slaying of the Lowlander would naturally cause his colleagues to desert in a body. Search was therefore made throughout the camp for the most powerful Celt that could be found.

By good luck it chanced that M'Grigor of Inverigny had in his company a man called Malcolm Durward of Mullach. He, however, had a boil on his thigh, and was lying in his plaid on the heather, as ferocious as a wild bull; with much trouble they persuaded him to go with them.

The most prominent gentlemen of the army had by now gathered at the scene of the contest, for general uneasiness had been caused by the untoward affair. The arrival of Durward, therefore, with the stone, caused breathless excitement in the rapidly increasing circle of spectators.

"Keep back," cried Lewis Gordon, "and let our champion of Mar have free room."

The stone went hurtling through the air, and cut

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the turf a yard beyond the mark of the Lowlander's best throw.

"Mar for ever," shouted Lewis Gordon, while loud applause rent the air. This feat caused Malcolm to burst the boil on his thigh, but after treatment he was himself again by next day.

Next day! ah, what a day of woe and terror! Since that fateful 16th of April, 1746, no more will the banner of the Stuarts spread its ample folds to the breeze amongst the mountains of Caledonia.

CHAPTER IX

SANDY MACKINTOSH



"SANDY AT HOME"

SANDY MACKINTOSH TOSSING THE CABER

CHAPTER IX

SANDY MACKINTOSH

“ To thee, lov’d Dee, thy gladsome plains
Where late wi’ careless thought I ranged,
Tho’ press’d wi’ care and sunk in woe,
To thee I bring a heart unchanged.

I love thee, Dee, thy banks and braes,
Tho’ there remembrance wake the tear;
For there he roved that brake my heart,
Yet to that heart still fondly dear.”

It was a perfect autumn day when I left the comfortable hostelry of the Invercauld Arms at Crathie, sometimes known as the Inver Inn, and walked along the main road eastwards till I found the rough but picturesque path to the abode of this celebrated athlete. The columns of the press and his portrait have made his fame and features familiar to admirers of muscular super-excellence all over the world, and I felt myself specially favoured to come, all unworthy, into the presence of this noted giant. My first impression was that of astonishment at the size of his legs. Not being a man of indoor games, I do not know what size the legs of a billiard table should be, but if I were ever the possessor of a Burroughes and Watts that broke down and needed support during repair, I would confidently invite Sandy to place his huge knees under one end, and firmly believe he would support it single-handed, or double-kneed, so to speak.

Born on September 28th, he is a bachelor in his

HIGHLAND GATHERINGS

seventy-seventh year, and formerly lived at Lawsie, opposite to Balmoral, 1,600 feet above sea-level, and has followed the plough for over fifty years. His cheerful house, called Rhynebaich (sounding like Ronnybake to my ears), contains the trophies he has won, of which an illustration appears opposite page 187.

An old Volunteer, he won the Queen's Cup in 1874. He won first prize for ploughing at the Crathie Agricultural Club and has seven medals in all, in addition to countless other things. The first won was in 1863 at Glengairn, when he put the 16 lb. stone 40 feet 4 inches.

2nd, 1873. 1st for same, 22 lb. 32 feet 11 inches at the Ballater Highland Games.

3rd, 1877. 1st, Ploughing at Crathie.

4th, 1879. 1st, ditto.

5th, 1896. Rifle Volunteer Shooting.

6th, 1923. A medal presented by W. Robb, jeweller to the King, for having competed fifty years at Braemar.

7th. The ordinary Long Service Volunteer Medal.

When he was seventy-one he took second prize for tossing the caber, but has not competed since 1923. His height is 6 feet 1 inch; weight, 16 stone; calf, 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; chest, 45 inches. A caber weighs roughly 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.

When he was forty-six years of age he could lift

SANDY MACKINTOSH

three weights of 56 lb. each off the floor with his teeth, viz., 12 stone. Some feat!

Sandy relates the following true anecdotes:—

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was asked at one gathering if he would like to see the mighty athletes from Deeside.

“Dee-cidedly!” His Royal Righness is reported to have replied; a spontaneous instance of Royal facetiousness.

Fifty years ago the Prince was out shooting in the Balmoral district. As it was a wet day, and “Sandy” was out, he turned to Colonel Baring, who was close to him, and said: “Give your mackintosh to Mackintosh. He is a Mackintosh.” Colonel Baring said he wished he had a hundred thousand more men like him, then Great Britain need fear no foe. In matters musical, Sandy excels in singing the song called “Fireman Smith.”

When the gathering was at Mar Castle one year, Sandy remembers Prince Leopold’s tutor being a competitor in a hurdle race, who on this occasion dived into a pool in the Dee during the race, and thus got on faster than the rest of the runners, who waded over in their kilts. He won the first prize of £5, but returned it to the Society. The late W. McCombie-Smith, the well-known athlete and author of “Athletes and Athletic Sports of Scotland,” once said that if

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Sandy had only trained and practised, he would certainly have beaten the famous Donald Dinnie himself, of whom I give a lengthy notice, commencing on page 173. A more genial man one rarely meets.

It was also my privilege to meet Sandy's brother Charles in his delightful garden at Ellangowan, Braemar. Although busily engaged in trimming a wonderful hedge of sweet peas, he was full of courtesy and information. Not only was he the Royal standard-bearer at the games for many years, but he is also president of the Royal Horticultural Society of Braemar. He does not approve of the fell racing at all, and believes His Majesty the King is not fond of the wrestling, or it would appear sooner on the programme than it does. He recollects the time when photographs were first taken before 1874, because they all had to stand perfectly still for several seconds, the instantaneous process of modern days not having been invented.

A portrait of Mr. Charles Mackintosh appears opposite page 78. As regards the shoulder-belt, which was a prize in 1824 presented by William Farquharson, I was glad to learn from the treasurer, Mr. John Ewan of Hillside Cottage, behind the Episcopal Church near the Invercauld Arms Hotel at Braemar, that it was a sort of masonic sash, apparently now in the possession of the relatives of Angus

SANDY MACKINTOSH

McIntosh of Glendussie. It was made of Stuart tartan, and had on it in gold lettering "Wrights' Society." He also kindly informed me at our pleasant interview that the snuff-box, for tossing the caber in 1859, won by G. Hutchinson at Balmoral, is now with Mrs. Hutchinson at Cliff House, near the Fife Arms Hotel.

" O vous qui buvez, à tasse pleine,
A cette heureuse fontaine,
Ou on ne voit, sur le rivage,
Que quelques vilains troupeaux,
Suivis de nymphes de village,
Qui les escortent sans sabots. . . ."

CHAPTER X

THE McCOMBIE-SMITHS

By C. D. McCOMBIE-SMITH

ἔοικε δε σ' ἴδμεν ἄεθλους·
οὐ μὲν γὰρ μεῖζον κλέος ἀνέρος ὄφρα κέν ᾗσιν,
ἢ ὅτι ποσσὶν τε ῥέξῃ και κερσιν ἐῆσιν.

—HOMER, *Odyssey* viii. 146.

CHAPTER X

THE MCCOMBIE-SMITHS

To those who have followed the course of athletic sports in Scotland, the name of McCombie-Smith is probably the most familiar one of all those who have climbed to the top of the tree. But still the following contribution from the pen of the head of that family at the present time may not inaptly form the concluding portion of this work.

W. McCombie-Smith was born in Aberdeenshire in 1847 and first competed in athletic sports at the age of nineteen. Up to the end of 1870 he confined himself mostly to local meetings, but in 1871 travelled to other counties, for instance to Dalbeattie in Kirkcudbrightshire, where he won seven first prizes, and during that season won sixty-three first, one hundred and sixteen second, and thirty-seven third prizes, a total of two hundred and sixteen, of which number ninety-five were won in the fifteen days ending 12th August.

At that time he was 5 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height

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and about 11 stones in weight and was undoubtedly the best all-round light-weight in Scotland, winning competitions at hammer and ball-throwing, tossing the caber, wrestling, high leap, long leap, hop, step and jump, pole leaping and running. He was a first-class distance runner and hurdler and had no superior at his weight at caber-tossing, a sport distinctively Scottish, and requiring perhaps a higher combination of concentrated strength and skill than any other field sport.

In the summer of 1873 he won a total of two hundred and thirty-five prizes, including one hundred and nine firsts, forty-one seconds, and eighty-five thirds.

During the following three years, he was engaged in fitting himself for his life's work as a teacher, but competed regularly in the summer months at all the leading meetings. His first appointment was as English Master at High Harrogate College, Yorkshire, but he disliked the work, and soon returned to Scotland where he was appointed Headmaster of Blackwater School in Perthshire, at which he spent the remainder of his life.

For the long period of thirty-five years he was a successful competitor at various meetings, and in 1901 had won one thousand and twenty-six prizes in athletics. Good as his athletic record was, it was

THE McCOMBIE-SMITHS

as an author and supporter of Highland games that he was best known in Scotland and beyond it.

Besides contributing endless articles to various newspapers and periodicals, he published during his residence in Perthshire, "Landowners and Landowners' Laws," "Memoirs of the Family of McCombie and Thoms," "The Athletes and Athletic Sports of Scotland," "The Romance of Poaching," and "Men or Deer in the Scottish Glens." The last named book caused something of a sensation at the time, and has been quoted in the House of Commons within recent years, although published in 1901. As an authority on Scottish games, he had no equal, and deserves to be remembered by all athletes for his efforts to push the cause of real Scottish sports.

For many years he endeavoured to obtain what no one had troubled to get previously, viz., genuine records of distances accomplished by the best athletes with hammers and balls of certified weight on ground certified level.

Dinnie, Davidson, Tait, Fleming and other great athletes of the past laid claim to various records, some of them of astonishing magnitude, but none of which could be substantiated.

With the aid of several games' committees, notably Pitlochry, Aberfeldy, and Fortwilliam, and the able assistance of Mr. T. Michie of Cluneskea in

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Perthshire, himself a notable athlete and a capable judge, he eventually succeeded in obtaining records of performances which are undoubtedly genuine and cannot be confuted.

G. H. Johnstone was the first to set up a genuine record of 119 feet $\frac{1}{2}$ inch with 16 lb. hammer on level ground, and a few years later A. A. Cameron had the chance at Pitlochry to set up records which still stand unbeaten.

Unfortunately, so far as the writer knows, there is at present no games ground in Scotland where an athlete has the opportunity to set up a genuine record at any event, and this is the more unfortunate as we have an athlete, in James Maitland, of Deskford, Cullen, who is as good a hammer-thrower as ever lived.

Mr. McCombie-Smith married the youngest sister of the world-famous Donald Dinnie, and in 1880 his son Cuthbert Dinnie was born. From infancy he came in contact with the best athletes, such as Davidson, MacRae, Johnstone, Anderson, etc., and naturally his earliest ambition was to be an athlete.

He first competed against all comers in 1902 after returning from the South African War, and was fairly successful against perhaps the strongest opposition ever known in Scotland. From 1902 till the Great



A. A. CAMERON

Facing p. 203



ANDERSON AT BREADALBANE

Photo, Tropical

THE McCOMBIE-SMITHS

War, there was an unusual number of first-class competitors at all branches of sport.

In 1910 C. D. McCombie-Smith putted the ball on level ground at Alloa 43 feet 10 inches, and the same week tied for first at high leap with 5 feet 5½ inches, besides getting well over 100 feet with the 16 lb. hammer and about 10 feet with the pole.

He was also a successful competitor in Cumberland wrestling both before and after the Great War.

Since the war he has thrown a hammer over 114 feet, and won the all-weights wrestling at Bridge of Allan, the caber at Oban, and hammer, ball, and caber at Glenisla, besides putting up a good fight against men such as Starkey, Nicholson, and Graham at various meetings.

He has been competing in open competition for twenty-five years, and has, like his father, won over one thousand prizes. So far as the writer knows, no other family can claim a like record.

“ The land o’ heather, hill, and glen,
The bagpipe and the bonnet,
The country o’ the kilted clans—
A blessing be upon it.
And, friend, my toast this festive time
Is ‘ Health to thee and thine,
Long life and all prosperity,
For the days o’ Auld Lang Syne.’ ”

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